

The Forgotten Monotheism

Shortened English Version
Abu Hamzah al-Afghani



The Message of All Prophets

The Forgotten Monotheism – *Shortened English Version*

Abu Hamzah al-Afghani

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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Abu Hamzah al-Afghani

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Translated by Abu Ibrahim

Author's Note on this Printable Version

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I would further like to explicitly indicate here that there is no other English version of this book which I have read through and approved in this manner although some people have translated some of my texts into the English language or other languages without consulting me.

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Abu Hamzah al-Afghani

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Preface to the English Edition

All praises are due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah alone and that Muhammad (saws)¹ is His Servant and His Messenger.

I wrote this English foreword after a brother called to my attention that the theme dealt with in this book is very difficult to understand in the English language, firstly because it has been translated from the Arabic language and secondly because the English reader is not so familiar with this topic. Therefore, I hope that by means of this foreword I am able to explain to the reader all which is essential in order to attain the correct understanding of this book.

As it is well known, Islam is derived from two sources: the Qur'an and the Sunnah². In both of them Allah (swt³) has explained to mankind all it needs in the *dunya*⁴ and the *aakhirah*⁵. Since it is from the known attributes of Allah (swt) that He is Al-Hakeem, the All-Wise, it is unimaginable that if He wants to explain something to mankind, He would not do this with utmost clarity; all issues must definitely be plainly explained in these two sources. If this point is applicable to this *deen*⁶ in general, in all its issues, how then must it be for the very explanation of the fundament of this deen? Is it imaginable that Al-Hakeem with His infinite *hikmah*⁷ did not sufficiently explain the most important issue of Islam? Never! Therefore, it ought to be clear to every Muslim and he must

¹ *Salla-llahu 'alaihi wa sallam*: peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

² *Sunnah*: whatever is revealed from the Prophet (saws).

³ *Subhaanahu wa ta'ala*: glory be to Him.

⁴ *Dunya*: this world.

⁵ *Aakhirah*: the hereafter.

⁶ *Deen*: religion, comprehensive lifestyle.

⁷ *Hikmah*: wisdom.

know that Allah (swt) explained with utmost clarity what Islam is – its precise definition and its precise limits. Additionally, He even repeated this definition again and again. For this is the foundation – the most important issue in Islam – upon which all the rest is built.

It is often repeated that Islam is so easy to understand, yet when you take a look at the reality you see that the understanding which people have of Islam is entirely chaotic. The answers to questions such as “What is Islam”, “What is a Muslim”, “What is *shirk*¹” and “What is a *mushrik*²” are anything but clear. If Islam is really so easy to understand – and it really is – why do we find so many differences in opinions? The answers to these questions need to be clear: The ambiguity definitely does not lie in the explanations provided by the Creator. It lies solely in the creation. Some people do not want to understand it from the beginning, others cannot or do not want to accept it for their own reality and implement it into their own lives.

In many narrations the Prophet (saws) was asked: ***“Oh Messenger of Allah! What is Islam?”*** So he replied: ***“That you worship Allah alone and you do not associate anything with Him”***. Several scholars repeatedly emphasized that you must only refer to the Qur’an and the Sunnah for the question *“What is Islam?”*. This question has been answered with the definition given by the Prophet (saws) – there is no need of philosophy and complex thinking. Even Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab³ knew the answer and they rejected it because they knew it and understood it so well. It was the philosophers who began to worship their (own) intellect and then placed it

¹ *Shirk*: polytheism.

This document deals exclusively with the so-called *shirk akbar* (major *shirk*), which means it deals with polytheism, the worshipping of someone else beside Allah. Major *shirk* is the polar opposite of Islam as will be explained.

In the following course of this essay it is important to bear in mind, that the topic of this book is not the so-called *shirk asghar* (minor *shirk*).

² *Mushrik*: one who commits *shirk* by worshipping others besides Allah.

³ Two of the greatest enemies of the Prophet (saws), on them is the curse of Allah.

above the Qur'an and Sunnah. They thought that "*La ilaaha illa Allah*" means "*there is no god, no creator, no giver of life, no provider...except Allah*". So Allah (swt) punished them with their ignorance. Whoever comprehends the Qur'an must consequently know that "*ilaah*" means "*one who is worshipped*" and not for instance *god* or *creator*, as it is claimed.

The mushrikoon¹ knew with surety that *La ilaaha illa Allah* means there is no one worthy of worship except Allah. They said clearly:

﴿أَجْعَلِ الْآلِهَةَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عُجَابٌ﴾

"Has he made all those who are worshipped (aalihah) into one ilaah²? Verily, this is really something very strange!"³

Quite evidently they meant to inquire: "Does he (Muhammad (saws)) want to make all those whom we worship into one worshipped alone?" When the philosophers come across such verses as well as many other similar verses, they become overwhelmed with confusion.

When Musa⁴(as⁵) and his people passed a group of people who were worshipping idols, did not the people of Musa say:

﴿اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ﴾

"...make for us (such) an ilaah the way they have aalihah⁶."⁷

¹ *Mushrikoon*: Those who commit shirk by worshipping others besides Allah, plural of mushrik.

² *Ilaah*: One who is worthy of worship.

³ Surah Saad 38:5.

⁴ *Musa*: Moses.

⁵ *Alaihi s-salam*: peace be upon him.

⁶ *Aalihah*: plural of ilaah (one who is worthy of worship).

⁷ Surah Al-'A'raaf 7:138.

The word *ilaah* in this verse here does not mean “make a *creator* for us, the way they have so many *creators*”. It rather means: “Make for us one **worshipped** just like they also have many **worshipped**¹”. Whoever reads the commentaries of these philosophers concerning such verses, will find that their minds are confused. Even though some people regard these as the greatest scholars who ever existed in history. In reality it is they who are amongst the most ignorant people concerning Allah and His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saws).

Regard it as a poison, which is taught in the majority of the so-called Islamic universities as the fundament of belief in Islam – a poison which brought us finally into this miserable condition, wherein we find ourselves today.

Thus, the majority of the mushrikoon knew the meaning of La Ilaha illa Allah and understood that it ment to whorship none but Allah. To an even greater extent it was clear to them, that He is the One and Only Creator, Life-Giver and Provider². Many verses in the Qur’an support this fact:

﴿وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَا يُفْكُونَ﴾

“And if you were to ask them, ‘Who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law)’, they will certainly reply: ‘Allah.’ How are they then deluded away (from Allah and from worshipping him exclusively)?”³

The poison continues to press forward. In the last centuries it dug its way through and finally reached the root of this deen; now it is the turn of the

¹ To make it clear: “Make for us someone/something we can worship just like they have many they can worship.”

² The One who gives sustenance.

³ Surah Al-ʿAnkaboot 29:61.

crystal clear definition of Islam to be attacked. *Shaytaan*¹ wishes to deface and change Allah's religion – just like he did many times before. So, there came the Messengers to the nations who were absolutely convinced that they are Muslims and that Allah loves them. However, the Prophets came and told them clearly that which was unheard for them, inconceivable and unimaginable: "You are mushrikoon and not Muslims".

Consequently, there was war – and this is how the battle between good and evil, between Islam and shirk began and is proceeding; since the first appearance of shirk among the people of *Nuh*² (as) until the Day of Resurrection. Such is Allah's (swt) Will; howsoever He has decreed it in His infinite Wisdom.

Whoever understands the scheme of Shaytaan in this battle also grasps the degree of his crookedness. The people of every community did not fall into shirk from one day to the other. No, in fact as time went by they forgot what Allah actually wanted from them, similar to the nation of Nuh (as). It cost Shaytaan a long process to make people think that they are secure and will always remain Muslims. As if he slowly put them into a deep sleep, nothing left for them but to wake up as mushrikoon – not even knowing or understanding why they are not Muslims anymore. Such the cursed one has always done.

The reader, may Allah guide him and us all to Islam and may Allah let us die in Islam, must be aware that perhaps many people who consider themselves as Muslims are full of this poison. And confronted with the reality of the basis of Islam some of them in fact will be in need of urgent help to strengthen them in their original and real faith. Allah says:

﴿وَانْطَلَقَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنِ امْشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَى آلِهَتِكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ﴾

¹ *Shaytaan*: Satan.

² *Nuh*: Noah.

“And the leaders among them went about (saying): Go on, and remain constant to your aalihah (those whom you are worshipping)! For this is truly a thing designed (against you)!”¹

...and Allah says:

﴿اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهَبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

“They² took their scholars and their monks to be their lords besides Allah³, and (they also took as their Lord) Messiah, son of Maryam⁴, while they were commanded to worship none but One Ilaah: La Ilaaha illa huwa⁵. Glorified is He (far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him).”⁶

May Allah (swt) let us be of those on whom He will bestow His Mercy, may He let us die as Muslims in order to escape His terrible punishment and enter His Paradise. In reality, it is not necessary to explain to a Muslim that one can never be a Muslim as long as this person worships anything other than Allah (swt). If **Islam** means **to worship only Allah alone** and if **Muslim** means **someone who ONLY worships Allah alone**, how can a person then be that **someone who only worships Allah alone** and simultaneously worships something other than Allah

How can one stick to the view that this person fulfills the fundamental prerequisites of being a Muslim? Therefore, know – may Allah let you and us enter Paradise – that a Muslim is a person who worships Allah alone

¹ Surah Saad 38:6.

² Jews and Christians.

³ By obeying them in matters that they made lawful or unlawful according to their own desires without it being ordered by Allah.

⁴ Maryam: Mary.

⁵ La Ilaaha illa huwa: none has the right to be worshipped but He.

⁶ Surah At-Tawbah 9:31.

and a mushrik is a person who worships something other than Allah or worships something besides Allah. Therefore, a mushrik can never be a Muslim, whether he knows this or not. As a matter of fact, being a Muslim or being a mushrik are both states in which a person finds himself – irrelevant of his acknowledgement. In order to explain and prove this, I have listed irrefutable and clear evidences from the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The importance of this issue will not become clear to anyone as long as he does not know that committing shirk does not just mean to prostrate before someone else besides Allah or to pray to him or to bring him a sacrifice. In fact, some of the greatest forms of shirk consist of obeying someone or following someone who prohibits the permitted and permits the prohibited, or creates laws which are in contradiction to Islam¹ – whether that lawmaker is a ruler or a scholar or whosoever.

Whoever knows this clearly recognizes without a doubt that a majority of people worship their political leaders, their scholars, their constitutions, their homeland, their freedom, their intellect and the majority of the people (democracy). By obeying and following these people or objects and accepting and legitimizing them, they fall into the act of worshipping, as Allah has defined and revealed to us clearly in the Qur'an.

I thank Allah the All-Mighty who helped me with this book and I ask Allah to let my intention be purely for Him alone. Then I thank all those who worked together with me for this edition of the book, its correction and translation. May Allah lead us to the correct understanding of Islam and may He accept it from us and let us die as Muslims and unite us with the Prophets (as²) of Islam (the religion of all Prophets) in His Paradise. Allahumma Ameen.

Abu Hamzah Al-Afghani

¹ This means that this person **accepts** these laws, having the **knowledge** that these laws contradict the laws of Allah.

² *alayhim as-salam*: peace be upon them.

The Irrefutable Evidences for the Difference Between a Muslim and a Mushrik

The First Evidence

Islam and shirk, in their true meanings, are complete opposites.

The meanings of Islam and shirk are explained absolutely clearly in the Qur'an and Sunnah. So he who commits shirk does not fulfill the fundamental principle of Islam. How can he then still be defined as a Muslim? One is either Muslim or mushrik, a third group does not exist!

Islam means “to completely submit oneself under the Will of Allah”, including humility, submission and obedience.¹ Allah (swt) says:

﴿بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

“Yes, but whoever submits his face (whole self) to Allah² and he is a Muhsin³ then his reward is with his Lord (Allah), on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”⁴

At-Tabary narrates from some of the *salaf*⁵ as follows:

¹ Unanimous agreement of the scholars of language and tafseer.

² Whoever performs his deeds free from shirk, purely for Allah: *akhlasa lillah*.

³ *Muhsin*: A doer of good.

⁴ Surah Al-Baqarah 2:112.

⁵ *Salaf*: those scholars who lived before our time, particularly the three first generations after the death of the Prophet (saw).

كما حدثني المثنى قال، حدثنا إسحاق قال، حدثنا ابن أبي جعفر ، عن أبيه ، عن الربيع: (بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ) ، يقول أَخْلَصَ لِلَّهِ. وكما قال زيد بن عمرو بن نفيل وأسلمت وجهي لِمَنْ أَسْلَمْتُ ... له الْمُزْنُ تَحْمِلُ عَذْبًا زُلَالًا يعني بذلك استسلمت لِعِطَاعَةِ مَنْ استسلم لِعِطَاعَتِهِ الْمَزْنُ وانتادت له، وخصَّ الله جل ثناؤه بالخير عَمَّنْ أخبر عنه بقوله "بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ" بإسلام وجهه له دُونَ سائر جوارحه لِأَنَّ أكرمَ أعضاء ابن آدمَ وجوارحه وجهه وهو أعظمها عليه حُرْمَةً وحقًا فإذا خضع لشيء وجهه الذي هو أكرمُ أجزاء جسده عليه فعبره من أجزاء جسده أخرى أن يكون أخضع له، ولذلك تُذكر العربُ في مَنْطِقِهَا الْخَبَرَ عن الشيء فتضيفه إلى وجهه وهي تعني بذلك نفس الشيء وعينه... وتأويلُ الكلام "بلى مَنْ أخلص طاعته لله وعبادته له ، مُحسنًا في فعله ذلك.

"That they said, "he who submits his whole self to Allah" means akhlasa lillah. Like Zaid ibnu 'Amr ibni Nufail¹ also said: "I have surrendered my face (my whole self) to Him, to Whom the clouds carrying pure water also surrendered." This means, "I have submitted myself to His obedience, to Whose obedience the clouds have also submitted and Whose orders they follow." In this verse Allah (swt) mentions those who submit their faces exclusively for Allah. Mentioning the face here has been given preference to over the rest of the body because the most precious, important and worth protecting part of the body is the face. When a person submits his face – the most precious part of his body – to something or someone then the rest of the body naturally follows in submission. For the Arabs it was logical (linguistically) that when they mentioned the face it meant the body as a whole. So the verse means "Nay, whoever obeys and worships Allah purely (free from shirk) for Allah alone and carries it out in the best manner..."."

¹ He was one of the Hunafaa (the people who followed what was left of the true deen of Ibrahim (as) before Islam).

Islam means *to surrender oneself in the worship of Allah alone with submission without associating anything with Him*. Whosoever does not practice this can never be a Muslim. And how else can it be? Let us demonstrate this by means of an example: A man never rides a horse and never did ride a horse in the past. He always travels by foot. How can a rational and reasonable thinking person call him a horseman?

Similarly, a person who never submitted himself to Allah alone, someone who attributed others to Him, someone who never worshipped Him sincerely and still does not, such a person cannot be described as a Muslim. His deeds are not according to the deeds of a Muslim and he does not possess the characteristics required in Islam which would make him to a Muslim. No one with a common sense would define him as a Muslim.

Ibnu Taymiyyah (ra) says:

ولهذا كان كلُّ مَنْ لم يعبدِ الله فلا بد أن يكونَ عابدا لغيره يعْبُدُ غيره فيكون مشركا وليس في بني آدمَ قسمٌ ثالثٌ بل إما موحدٌ أو مشركٌ أو مَنْ خلطَ هذا بهذا كالمبدِّلين مِنْ أَهْلِ المِلَلِ والنصارى وَمَنْ أَشَبَّهَهُمْ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ المُنْتَسِبِينَ إِلَى الإِسْلَامِ

“And so anyone who does not worship Allah, must undoubtedly be worshipping something other than Him: he worships someone other than Him and is therefore a mushrik. Among the sons of Adam there is no third type. There is only muwahhid¹ and mushrik or those who mix both parts like the distorters of the followers of different religions and the Christians and those who have gone astray who consider themselves to be in Islam.”²

The one who reflects over this passage, will find that Ibnu Taymiyyah says five times, each time in a different way that someone who commits shirk can never be a Muslim. Is there something clearer than that? Therefore,

¹ *Muwahhid*: a person who fulfills Tawheed.

² Majmu' ul-Fataawa 14:282, 284.

all the plurivalent statements¹ from Ibnu Taymiyyah² should be explained with this plain, excellent and transparent statement of his!

Shaykh Abd ur-Rahman ibnu Hasan³ (ra) and Shaykh Abd ul-Latif (ra) say⁴:

فَإِنَّ مَنْ فَعَلَ الشِّرْكَ، فَقَدْ تَرَكَ التَّوْحِيدَ، فَإِنَّمَا ضِدَّانِ لَا يَجْتَمِعَانِ، فَمَتَى وُجِدَ الشِّرْكَ، انْتَفَى التَّوْحِيدُ

“He who commits shirk, leaves tawheed. For they are two opposites which never come together. When shirk is found (in a person his) tawheed becomes nonexistent”.⁵

The Second Evidence

“Verily, Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners (in worship) with Him.”

Allah says:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ﴾

“Verily, Allah forgives not (the sin of) setting up partners (in worship) with Him.”⁶

Many people however say: “Allah **forgives** setting up partners with Him”.

¹ Unclear statements: *mutashaabih*.

² (661-728 after hijrah) He was one of the best scholars in Islamic history. He was known for his extraordinary knowledge in various sciences of Islam and in the fields of knowledge which were directly or indirectly related to it (such as the different areas in the sciences of language). Ibnu Taymiyyah is therefore often titled as Shaykhu-l-Islam.

³ See “Explanation of the principle of Islam and its most important pillar”

⁴ See “Minhaaju-t-Ta’sisi wa-t-Taqdis”: 12.

⁵ Ad-Durar: 2: 204.

⁶ Surah An-Nisaa’ 4:116.

Whosoever claims that a person goes to Paradise even if he commits shirk, rejects this Qur’anic verse – he is convinced that Allah forgives the setting up of partners alongside Him. There are people who in fact follow this claim and even proclaim it.

From among these people are some who present the *hadeeth*¹ from Al-Aswad ibnu Sari^c (ra) as a proof. Therefore, the completely ignorant mushrik² will be trialed on the Day of Resurrection. And after the trial he will enter Paradise as a Muslim soul. But this narration actually means that he who is tested cannot be a Muslim until he passes the trial. Hence, there is no doubt that before the trial he was a mushrik.

If someone didn’t give much thought to this statement he could claim that the completely ignorant mushrik will be forgiven after his trial in the hereafter and this would also be contradictory to the above mentioned Ayah from the Qur’an.

In reality, the completely ignorant mushrik however, was not even *mukallaf*³ while in this world, whereas the ordinary man who received knowledge was very well mukallaf. The laws of obligations and prohibitions are only valid after *qiyaam ul-hujjah*⁴. Therefore, he is considered as one who did not act contrary to the obligations which are proclaimed by the Prophets (as) and will therefore not be exposed to any punishment. So he for whom *tawheed*⁵ was not made binding and shirk not banned by the text⁶, is not called a denier in this meaning.

¹ *Hadeeth*: narration.

² *al-mushriku-l-jaahil*: the ignorant mushrik who will be trialed. He is one who is in a state of ignorance of the guidance from Allah because the evidence did not reach him.

³ *Mukallaf*: he was not obligated and he was not responsible. This means that he was one of those who were not put on trial in this world.

⁴ *Qiyaam ul-hujjah*: obtaining knowledge by receiving the message which is proclaimed by the Prophets (as).

⁵ *Tawheed*: the concept of monotheism.

⁶ The books of revelation and the words of the Prophets (as).

The Third Evidence

The Muslim will not be tested on the Day of Resurrection according to the *ijmaa*¹. So he who is put on trial on the Day of Resurrection (was not a Muslim in the dunya) cannot be a Muslim.

Imaam Ahmad narrated in his musnad from Al-Aswad ibnu Sari^c that the Prophet (saws) said:

عَنِ الْأَسْوَدِ بْنِ سَرِيحٍ أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَرْبَعَةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ رَجُلٌ أَصَمٌ لَا يَسْمَعُ شَيْئًا وَرَجُلٌ أَهْمَقٌ وَرَجُلٌ هَرَمٌ وَرَجُلٌ مَاتَ فِي فِتْرَةٍ فَأَمَّا الْأَصَمُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّ لَقَدْ جَاءَ الْإِسْلَامُ وَمَا أَسْمَعُ شَيْئًا وَأَمَّا الْأَهْمَقُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّ لَقَدْ جَاءَ الْإِسْلَامُ وَالصَّبِيَّانُ يَخْذِفُونِي بِالْبُعْرِ وَأَمَّا الْهَرَمُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي لَقَدْ جَاءَ الْإِسْلَامُ وَمَا أَعْقِلُ شَيْئًا وَأَمَّا الَّذِي مَاتَ فِي الْفِتْرِ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّ مَا أَتَانِي لَكَ رَسُولٌ فَيَأْخُذُ مَوَائِدَهُمْ لِيُطِيعُنَّهُ فَيُرْسِلُ إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ ادْخُلُوا النَّارَ قَالَ فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَوْ دَخَلُوهَا لَكَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا مُعَاذُ بْنُ هِشَامٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَنْ أَبِي زَافِعٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ مِثْلَ هَذَا غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ فِي آخِرِهِ فَمَنْ دَخَلَهَا كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَدْخُلْهَا يُسْحَبُ إِلَيْهَا

“There will be four people on the Day of Judgment: A deaf one who cannot hear anything, one who is mentally disabled, one who is of very old age and one who died in the fatrah². The deaf one will say, “Oh my Lord, Islam came but I could not hear anything!” The mentally disabled will say, “Oh my Lord, Islam came and the kids were throwing dung at me!” The very old one will say, “Oh my Lord, Islam came but I did not understand!” And the one who died in the fatrah will say, “Oh my Lord, none of your prophets came to me!” Thereupon Allah will take a

¹ *Ijmaa*: scholarly consensus.

² *Fatrah*: The time or place when or where it was not possible to receive the message of a prophet.

covenant from them saying that they have to obey him. Then Allah will let a message come to them, "Enter the fire". The Prophet said, "I swear by the one in Who's Hand the soul of Muhammad is, if they would enter this fire it would be cool and comfortable for them!" Abu Hurairah narrated the same hadeeth with the following addition: "Whoever enters it, it will be cool and comfortable for him and whoever refuses to enter will be dragged into it (into the real Fire)!"

Ibn ul-Qayyim (rah¹) mentioned the transmission paths of this narration in his book 'Ahkaamu Ahli-dh-Dhimma' (Volume 2, pg. 650). After mentioning them he said:

أَنَّ أَحَادِيثَ هَذَا الْبَابِ قَدْ تَضَافَرَتْ وَكَثُرَتْ بِحَيْثُ يَشُدُّ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضًا، وَقَدْ صَحَّحَ الْحَفَاطُ بَعْضُهَا كَمَا صَحَّحَ الْبَيْهَقِيُّ وَعَبْدُ الْحَقِّ وَغَيْرُهُمَا حَدِيثَ الْأَسْوَدِ بْنِ سَرِيعٍ. وَحَدِيثُ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ إِسْنَادُهُ صَحِيحٌ مُتَّصِلٌ... أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْأَحَادِيثَ يَشُدُّ بَعْضُهَا بَعْضًا، فَإِنَّمَا قَدْ تَعَدَّدَتْ طَرَفُهَا وَاخْتَلَفَتْ مَخَارِجُهَا فَيُبْعَدُ كُلُّ الْبُعْدِ أَنْ تَكُونَ بَاطِلَةً عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ لَمْ يَتَكَلَّمْ بِهَا، وَقَدْ رَوَاهَا أُمَّةُ الْإِسْلَامِ وَدَوَّنُوهَا وَلَمْ يَطْعَنُوا فِيهَا.

„The ahaadeeth² dealing with this subject are numerous so that they strengthen one another and the scholars of hadeeth confirmed some of them as saheeh³, such as Al-Bayhaqi and Abd ul-Haqq and others confirmed the hadeeth from Al-Aswad. As well as the hadeeth of Abu Hurairah ...Moreover, the a'immah⁴ of Islam narrated them and wrote them down in their books without criticizing them.”

In the same book Ibn ul-Qayyim, mentions twenty points refuting the claim of those who deny this trial. The proofs mentioned by him are

¹ Rahimahullah: may Allah have mercy upon him.

² Ahaadeeth: plural of hadeeth.

³ Saheeh: Literally meaning **sound** or **correct**. In the classifications of hadeeth this term presents a very high level of correctness.

⁴ A'immah: plural of imam (leader/scholar).

correct because they are extracted from the Qur'an and the Sunnah and Allah knows best.

Among the scholars there is a difference of opinion concerning this trial. The difference of opinion however, does not bother us in any way because firstly, those scholars who completely deny this trial generally say **that there is no mushrik who will ever be excused** (due to his ignorance) and **that all the *mushrikeen*¹ have received the evidence**. In their view anyone who dies in the state of shirk will definitely dwell in hellfire forever. So it is clear that there is no indication whatsoever in any of the two scholarly opinions, which supports the opinion of those who declare the mushrikeen to Muslims.

Indeed both of the opinions – by the Grace of Allah – are plain and serious evidences. Once again it has been made apparent that the scholars are in agreement concerning this matter: Whoever worships anything other than or besides Allah is certainly not a Muslim, indeed he is a mushrik. Either he will enter hellfire directly or if he was an ignorant mushrik in this world he will first be faced with a trial on the Day of Judgment. It is however clear: he is definitely a mushrik because a Muslim will not be trialed on the Day of Judgment.

¹ *Mushrikeen*: mushrikoon.

The Fourth Evidence

Only a Muslim Soul Enters Paradise.

Bukhary narrates in his saheeh from Abu Hurairah and the same from Abdullah Ibn Masood in another hadeeth that the Prophet (saws) said:

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا نَفْسٌ مُسْلِمَةٌ

“For none will enter paradise but a Muslim soul”.

The ignorant mushrik then therefore never enters paradise except by becoming a Muslim through a trial which he will receive on the Day of Judgment. In this world he was an ignorant mushrik – there is no doubt about that.

The Fifth Evidence

Every matter has a basis. How can one ever be a Muslim if he has not recognized and implemented the basis of Islam?

Bukhary narrates from Ibnu Umar (ra¹) that the Prophet (saws) said:

بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ وَالْحَجِّ وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ

“Islam is built upon five [pillars]: the testimony that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing salaah², paying the zakaah³, hajj⁴ and fasting Ramadaan. In a different

¹ Radiya Allahu ‘anhu: may Allah be pleased with him.

² Salaah: regular prayer.

³ Zakaah: poor-due, obligation on Muslims to pay a certain amount from their wealth.

⁴ Hajj: pilgrimage.

narration it is stated: "Islam is built upon five [pillars]: Imaan¹ in Allah and His Messenger (saws), the five prayers,..."

In another narration from Muslim it is stated:

على أن يُوحَّد الله

"...to make Allah One,..."

And in another narration from him:

على أن يُعْبَد الله ويُكْفَر بما دونه

"...that Allah is worshipped and everything besides Him rejected..."

This is the basis of Islam upon which our deen is built. Very well then, which house remains intact after its foundation has been removed?

Abd ul-Latif and Ishaaq, the sons of Abd ur-Rahman Aali ash-Shaykh and Ibnu Sahman narrate from Ibn ul-Qayyim:

فهو عنده من جنس أهل الفترة ممن لم تبلغه دعوة رسول من الرسل وكلا النوعين لا يحكم بإسلامهم ولا يدخلون في مسمى المسلمين حتى عند من لم يكفر بعضهم...وأما الشرك فهو يصدق عليهم واسمه يتناولهم وأي إسلام يبقى مع مناقضة أصله وقاعدته الكبرى شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله

"For him he is like those of Ahl ul-fatrah², who were not reached by the message of any prophet. And both kinds of people cannot be judged as Muslims and they do not come under the category of those who are allowed to be called Muslims, not even for those who do not make takfeer³ on some of them...The term "shirk" must be applied to them and

¹ Imaan: belief in Allah with full sincerity of the heart, proclamation with the tongue, action with the limbs.

² Ahl ul-fatrah: people who lived in the time of fatrah.

³ Takfeer: judging someone to be a kaafir.

its meaning deals with them. Now then, what part of Islam remains after “La ilaha illa-Allah – There is no one worthy of worship except Allah” – its basis and mightiest foundation is disrupted?¹”

The Sixth Evidence

In this *deen* legal terms² are used for a person when they apply to him. A person will be called according to the deed which he does – rationally, by consensus, linguistically in all languages and according to the laws of Islam. This is clear and comprehensible to everyone.

Hence, he who drinks alcohol will be called an *alcohol drinking person*, he who commits adultery will be called an *adulterer*. He who worships something other than Allah will be called a *worshipper of something other than Allah*³. Thus, he who commits shirk will be called a *mushrik* and he who commits kufr⁴ will be called a *kaafir*. The reader should not become confused here concerning the subject of takfeer.

The laws of kufr⁵ can only then be completely applied to a person once he has received the Prophetic Message and has rejected it. According to the general view of *Ahl us-sunnah wal-Jama'a*⁶ the term kufr¹ – in this sense –

¹ *Takfeer ul-Mu'ayyan...* p. 43, by Ishaq ibn Abd ir-Rahman Aali ash-Shaykh.

² Legal terms: al-Asmaa' ash-Shar'iyah.

³ These expressions have been chosen in order to bring the reader closer to the meaning of the words in Arabic.

⁴ *Kufr*: The original linguistic meaning of *kafara* is *satara*, which means to cover something. Its Islamic meaning is to cover up the truth. A *kaafir* knows the truth about Allah and his *deen*, but turns away from it and tries to cover it.

⁵ *Ahkam ul-kufr*: These *ahkam* (laws) refer either to the hereafter (for example that the *kaafir* will not enter Paradise) or to this world (for example that the *kaafir* may be attacked in a war situation without repeating the Prophetic Message to him: he already received it and knows it. To compare, the people of *fatrah* are *unfamiliar* with this message).

⁶ *Ahl us-sunnah wal-Jama'a*: followers of the *sunnah* and the community.

is only then applied *after* a person has received the Message and the evidences and he is no more ignorant of the truth. He has committed kufr if he then turns away from it or declares it to be a lie.

Being in the state of a **mushrik** however is a state in which one finds himself – *irrelevant* of the fact whether he received Allah’s (swt) Message or not. The term mushrik can however also be applied to a person *before* he receives the Message. Hence, one must differentiate between shirk and kufr in the described manner. The laws of kufr will be applied to him according to his state, for instance the rulings concerning marriage between a Muslim and a mushrik.

The laws of battle and punishment though, are not applied to him in this world and the Hereafter, as mentioned above. These laws are only then relevant after he has received the Message, turned away from it and has become a kaafir. From now on he deserves to be treated according to all laws of kufr.

¹ The so-called *Kufru-t-ta’adhib* is a term which the scholars describe as the type of kufr which is committed *after* receiving the Message and the price of this type of kufr is the punishment for him in the hereafter (so long as he does not repent before his death).

The fact that every mushrik is a kaafir in the more general sense is clear – as Allah says in the Qur’an:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُّؤْمِنٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾

“It is He Who has created you; and of you are some that are kaafirs and some that are Believers: and Allah sees well all that ye do.” (At-Taghabun 64:2)

The scholars mean to say with this differentiation: If a mushrik did not receive the Prophetic Message then he is obviously, in the general sense of the word, a kaafir. At the same time the term *Kufu-t-ta’adhib* cannot be applied to him. Also, some scholars (for example of the Da’wah Najdiyyah) say, “We do not make takfeer on those mushrikeen”. They mean to say that the people of fatrah are in fact mushrikoon but on account of their ignorance one cannot say that they commit the type of kufr for which one receives the punishment in the hereafter. For a detailed description see in Arabic:

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The Muslim who commits shirk leaves Islam thereby: he has committed apostasy – whether he did this out of ignorance or incorrect interpretation of the evidences¹. It is however not permitted to implement all the laws of kufr on him before he receives the evidences.

In this regard Ibnu Taymiyyah said:

فَصُلِّ وَقَدْ فَرَّقَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَ مَا قَبْلَ الرِّسَالَةِ وَمَا بَعْدَهَا فِي أَسْمَاءٍ وَأَحْكَامٍ وَجَمَعَ بَيْنَهُمَا فِي أَسْمَاءٍ وَأَحْكَامٍ ... فَاسْمُ الْمُشْرِكِ ثَبَتَ قَبْلَ الرِّسَالَةِ فَإِنَّهُ يُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّهِ وَيَعْدِلُ بِهِ وَيَجْعَلُ مَعَهُ آهَةً أُخْرَى وَيَجْعَلُ لَهُ أُنْدَادًا قَبْلَ الرِّسُولِ وَيَثْبُتُ أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْأَسْمَاءَ مُقَدَّمٌ عَلَيْهَا وَكَذَلِكَ اسْمُ الْجَاهِلِ وَالْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يُقَالُ: جَاهِلِيَّةٌ وَجَاهِلًا قَبْلَ نَجِيِّ الرِّسُولِ وَأَمَّا التَّعْذِيبُ فَلَا

“As regards legal terms and rulings, Allah separated some of them and united some of them concerning that which was before the Risaalah² and that which was after it. Therefore, the term mushrik is applied to a person (who commits shirk) before he receives the Message because he is already worshipping something besides Allah and equalizing something with Him and worshipping others than Him. So these terms exist before the coming of a Prophet. Just like the term jahl³ and jaahiliyya⁴. The terms jaahiliyya and jaahil are used even before the arrival of a Prophet. As for the punishment, there is none in this case.”

¹ Translator’s note: If he committed shirk out of ignorance then retrospectively he was never a Muslim but it was never apparent (his shirk was not obvious until then). As a matter of fact he was a mushrik even if he was considered to be a Muslim prior to this incident (according to the laws of kufr).

As soon as a person’s shirk becomes apparent he must be treated as a mushrik without hesitation. Many people do not pay attention to this point and therefore generate several problems for themselves. A thorough explanation will follow.

² *Risaalah*: the Message of a Prophet.

³ *Jahl*: ignorance.

⁴ *Jaahiliyya*: time of ignorance.

⁵ Majmu’ ul-Fataawa 20/37.

May Allah guide us to the Truth – note how he explains the requirement needed to describe someone as a mushrik. Note how he uses the Arabic term “إِنْ” for emphasis and confirms the matter thereby.

It is obvious from his statement that a person is a mushrik if he commits “*shirk akbar*”¹ and he can certainly not be a Muslim. This is actually contrary to the lies which people have fabricated against him concerning his opinion in this matter.

Explanations by Ibnu Hazm

وقال تعالى "إِنْ تَابُوا" يعني من الشرك "وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ" وهذا نص جلي على أن من صلى من أهل شهادة الإسلام وزكى فهو أخونا في الدين ولم يُقَلَّ تعالى ما لم يأت بكبيرة فصَحَّ أَنَّهُ مِنَّا وَإِنْ أَتَى بِالْكَبَائِرِ

“And Allah says: but if they repent (from shirk), establish regular prayers and give zakaah, they are your brethren in Faith. This is a clear text which indicates that he who performs the prayer from amongst the people of the Islamic shahaadah² and gives zakaah, joins our deen as our brother. And Allah the Exalted did not say: as long as he does not commit major sins. So the correct (opinion) is that he is from us (Muslims) even if he commits major sins^{3, 4}”

Notice how Ibnu Hazm is in conformity with the consensus of all scholars, especially with the scholars of *tafseer*⁵: It is not obligatory for a person to be free from major sins to be a Muslim. He must merely be free from shirk. He says further:

¹ *Shirk akbar*: major shirk, it brings one out of the fold of Islam.

² *Shahaadah*: to bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah.

³ Major sins: *kabaa'ir*.

⁴ الفصل في الملل والأهواء والنحل – فصل في قول المسلم أنا مؤمن, 3: 287

⁵ *Tafseer*: explanation of the Holy Qur'an.

وقال سائر أهل الإسلام كل من اعتقد بقلبه اعتقادا لا يشك فيه وقال بلسانه لا إله إلا الله وأن محمدا رسول الله وأن كل ما جاء به حق وبرئ من كل دين سوى دين محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فإنه مسلم مؤمن.

“And all other Muslims say¹: ‘He who is convinced with his heart and without any doubt whatsoever and says with his tongue, ‘there is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger’ and that all what he (saws) came with is the truth and frees himself from every deen except the deen of Muhammad (saws), verily he is truly a Muslim Mu’min^{2, 3}”

Just take a look at how he narrates the well-known conditions of Islam. He knows that a person can never be a Muslim as long as he does not know and is not completely convinced that none is allowed to be worshipped other than Allah. So how can a person be a Muslim if he worships something other than Allah?

As Ibnu Hazm explains: Islam is impossible even by the mere ignorance of this matter. So how can the ignorance of a mushrik suddenly transform him into a Muslim, taking into account that he cannot even be a Muslim without this knowledge?

Additionally, one must reject every deen other than Islam and practice *al-kufu bit-taghoot*⁴. How can one reject the deen of the mushrikeen when his actions (of shirk) are identical to the mushrikeen? How can one make kufr against at-taghoot (reject him) and not worship him while worshipping him at the same time? Is there a greater contradiction than that?

¹ He means in contrary to the *Mu'tazilah* who say, "he who has not recognized the truth by the laws of philosophy is not a Muslim".

² *Mu'min*: a person who has imaan.

³ الفصل في الملل والأهواء والنحل - فصل هل يكون مؤمنا من اعتقد الإسلام دون الاستدلال, 4: 67

⁴ *Al-kufu bit-taghoot*: rejecting and denying anything and anyone which is worshipped other than Allah.

Ibnu Hazm says further:

لا خلاف بيننا وبينهم ولا بين أحد من الأمة في أن من كفر بالطاغوت وآمن بالله واستمسك بالعروة الوثقى التي لا انفصام لها فإنه مؤمن مسلم

“There is no difference in opinion between us and them and anyone from the (Islamic) ummah¹ in this, that whoever practices kufr bit-taghoot and believes in Allah and grasps the most trustworthy handhold (i.e. Islam) that will never break, then he is indeed a Mu’min Muslim.”²

Further Statements from Ibnu Taymiyyah (ra)

This chapter simply serves as a confirmation of that which has already been said. What has been mentioned is entirely clear, it is not possible to add more to make it clearer. This is merely a chapter refuting some of the erroneous beliefs which have become widespread concerning Ibnu Taymiyyah. What is narrated in the Qur’an, Sunnah and the consensus is sufficient as evidence. However, he who is only reassured with the evidences of Qur’an and Sunnah once he sees that Ibnu Taymiyyah also confirms these, for such a person we can just plead for Allah’s Guidance.

As mentioned above, whenever the scholars said, **“We do not make takfeer on this mushrik because the Message has not reached him”**, they did not mean that he is a Muslim – they simply meant thereby that he is indeed a mushrik and that he did not commit kufr for which he will be punished – the Message has just simply not reached him. This is known to everyone who knows their books. May Allah be merciful to them.

Ibnu Taymiyyah (ra) says:

فَعَلَى الْعَبْدِ أَنْ يَعْْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ وَيَدْعُوهُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ لَا يَسْقُطُ هَذَا عَنْهُ بِحَالٍ وَلَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا أَهْلُ التَّوْحِيدِ وَهُمْ أَهْلُ " لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ " فَهَذَا حَقُّ اللَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ عَبْدٍ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ...

¹ Ummah: community, nation.

² الفصل في الملل والأهواء والنحل – فصل في قول المسلم أنا مؤمن 3: 284

فَلَا يَنْجُوَنَّ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أَخْلَصَ لِلَّهِ دِينَهُ وَعِبَادَتَهُ وَدَعَاهُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ, وَمَنْ لَمْ يُشْرِكْ بِهِ وَلَمْ يَعْبُدْهُ فَهُوَ مُعْطَلٌ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَعِبَادَةِ غَيْرِهِ كَفَرَعُونَ وَأَمْثَالِهِ فَهُوَ أَسْوَأُ حَالًا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِ. فَلَا بَدْءَ مِنْ عِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَهَذَا وَاجِبٌ عَلَى كُلِّ أَحَدٍ فَلَا يَسْقُطُ عَنْ أَحَدٍ الْبَتَّةَ وَهُوَ الْإِسْلَامُ الْعَامُّ الَّذِي لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ دِينًا غَيْرَهُ. وَلَكِنْ لَا يُعَذِّبُ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا حَتَّى يَبْعَثَ إِلَيْهِ رَسُولًا وَكَمَا أَنَّهُ لَا يُعَذِّبُهُ فَلَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا نَفْسٌ مُسْلِمَةٌ مُؤْمِنَةٌ وَلَا يَدْخُلُهَا مُشْرِكٌ وَلَا مُسْتَكْبِرٌ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ فَمَنْ لَمْ تَبْلُغْهُ الدَّعْوَةُ فِي الدُّنْيَا امْتَحَنَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّبَعَ الشَّيْطَانَ فَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ لَا يَدْخُلُ النَّارَ وَلَا يُعَذِّبُ اللَّهُ بِالنَّارِ أَحَدًا إِلَّا بَعْدَ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ إِلَيْهِ رَسُولًا فَمَنْ لَمْ تَبْلُغْهُ دَعْوَةُ رَسُولٍ إِلَيْهِ كَالصَّغِيرِ وَالْمَجْنُونِ وَالْمَيِّتِ فِي الْفَتْرَةِ الْمَحْضَةِ فَهَذَا يُمْتَحَنُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا جَاءَتْ بِذَلِكَ الْأَنْبَاءُ.

“The servant is obliged to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion as well as his obligation to call upon Him with sincere devotion. This obligation is not cancelled out in any situation. Only the people of tawheed will enter Paradise and they are the people of La ilaaha illa Allah. This is Allah’s Right over his servants...They will surely not escape Allah’s Punishment, except if they devote their deen to Allah, worship Allah alone and only call upon Him with sincere devotion. And he who does not attribute others besides Allah and at the same time also does not worship Him, leaves the worship completely – like Pharaoh and his likes. They are even worse than the mushrikeen. So it is definitely obligatory for every person to worship Allah alone, always and in every situation. So this is the general Islam¹ and Allah accepts no deen apart from this Islam.

Allah however, does not punish anyone before He sends a Prophet to him, just like He only allows the Muslim soul of a Mu’min to enter Paradise. No mushrik and no arrogant man who hesitated to worship

¹ The so called ‘general Islam’ is the one Message of all Prophets, the true monotheism.

Allah will enter it. Those to whom the da'wah¹ did not reach in the dunya, they will be exposed to a trial on the Day of Judgment and no one will enter the Fire except those who followed shaytaan. He who did not commit any sins, will not enter the Fire and likewise Allah will not punish anyone with the Fire until He has sent a Prophet to him. Those to whom the Message did not reach, such as the children, the mentally ill and those who died in the times of fatrah, they will be tested in the Hereafter as we know from the narrations.²

He also says:

فَصَلِّ : وَكَثِيرًا مَا يَتَصَوَّرُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِصُورَةِ الْمَدْعُوِّ الْمُنَادَى الْمُسْتَعَاثِ بِهِ إِذَا كَانَ مَيِّتًا . وَكَذَلِكَ قَدْ يَكُونُ حَيًّا وَلَا يَشْعُرُ بِالَّذِي نَادَاهُ ; بَلْ يَتَصَوَّرُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِصُورَتِهِ فَيُظَنُّ الْمُشْرِكُ الضَّالُّ الْمُسْتَعِيثُ بِذَلِكَ الشَّخْصِ أَنَّ الشَّخْصَ نَفْسَهُ أَجَابَهُ وَإِنَّمَا هُوَ الشَّيْطَانُ وَهَذَا يَقَعُ لِلْكَفَّارِ الْمُسْتَعِيثِينَ بِمَنْ يُحْسِنُونَ بِهِ الظَّنَّ مِنَ الْأَمْوَاتِ وَالْأَحْيَاءِ كَالنَّبَارَى الْمُسْتَعِيثِينَ بِمُجْرَسٍ وَغَيْرِهِ مِنْ قَدَادِيْسِهِمْ وَيَقَعُ لِأَهْلِ الشِّرْكِ وَالضَّلَالِ مِنَ الْمُتَسَيِّبِينَ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَعِيثُونَ بِالْمَوْتَى وَالْغَائِبِينَ يَتَصَوَّرُ هُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ فِي صُورَةِ ذَلِكَ الْمُسْتَعَاثِ بِهِ وَهُوَ لَا يَشْعُرُ ... وَذَكَرَ لِي غَيْرُ وَاحِدٍ أَنَّهُمْ اسْتَعَاثُوا بِِي كُلِّ يَذْكُرُ قِصَّةَ غَيْرِ قِصَّةٍ صَاحِبِهِ فَأُخْبِرْتُ كُلًّا مِنْهُمْ أَنِّي لَمْ أُجِبْ أَحَدًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا عَلِمْتُ بِاسْتِعَاثَتِهِ فَقِيلَ : هَذَا يَكُونُ مَلَكًا فَقُلْتُ : الْمَلِكُ لَا يُعِثُ الْمُشْرِكُ...

“The shaytaan often appears in the form of someone to whom supplications are made (instead of Allah, in matters where only Allah can help). Usually this person is already dead. Sometimes it also occurs that he appears in the form of a living person, without this person realizing that people call upon him. It is the shaytaan who has taken up this person’s shape in order to make the deluded mushrik, who is calling upon him for help (instead of Allah) to think that this person answered

¹ Da'wah: the call, the Message of the Prophets.

² Majmu' ul-Fataawa 14: 477

him personally while in reality it was shaytaan. This happens to the kuffaar who call upon the people for help, whether dead or living – those whom they think well of, for instance the Christians who call upon their saints. It also happens to the people of shirk and error, who consider themselves to be in Islam but call upon the living and dead (instead of Allah) for help. The shaytaan appears to them in the form of a person whom they call upon for help. This person however, does not know anything about that...Like this, many people have told me that they called upon me for help¹. Each one of them informed me of a different incident. I told them all that I did not respond to any of them and do not know of any such occurrence. They replied: “Maybe it was an angel who helped us.” So I told them: “The angels don’t help the mushrikeen...”²”

The seventh evidence

The mushrik surely does not fulfill the *condition of knowledge* from the conditions of *La ilaaha illa Allah*. How can he then be a Muslim?

All scholars are in agreement that a person can only then be a Muslim when he fulfills the condition of knowledge:

﴿فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ﴾

“Know, therefore, that there is no ilaah but Allah.”³

Usually when someone worships anything other than Allah, he does it because he perceives in it godly attributes. Or at least we can say that he definitely thinks it deserves to be worshipped. If he does not think like this then he can anyway not be an ignorant mushrik but rather a mushrik who is consciously negligent and therefore a kaafir because the Message has reached him and he knows it is wrong to worship something other than

¹ Istighaatha

² Majmu' ul-Fataawa 19: 47/48.

³ Surah Muhammad 47:19.

Allah (swt) and he knows that no one deserves to be worshipped except Allah (swt).

He however, worships something else regardless of this knowledge. Some people would like to prove their misconception by giving an example. They describe a possible situation, which actually proves the exact opposite of what they are trying to convey. Additionally, the example they provide is highly unlikely to occur. The possible situation goes as follows:

“How would it be if a man living in a secluded village, separated from civilization and a calamity befalls him. He turns for help to the only shaykh¹ in the village – a Sufi shaykh. The man has only heard well of this shaykh and all the people confirm that he is a knowledgeable man. It is not possible for this man to travel in order to hear the opinions of other scholars. The Message has not reached this man and he has no opportunity to obtain the Truth. So this man goes to the shaykh to ask him which steps he should take. The shaykh replies: “The Prophet (saw) says in an authentically narrated saheeh hadeeth with a correct narration chain (as he claims): ‘If the breast feels tight, then calling upon the dwellers of the graves is right (the well-known, cursed and false hadeeth).’” Thereupon the man goes and supplicates to the dead for that which nobody can fulfill except Allah – and ends up committing shirk. So one can say that this man actually intended nothing else but to obey Allah and His Prophet and to do that which the Prophet (saw) instructed him to do.”

Notice, this man (given in the example) surely does not know the meaning of *La ilaaha illa Allah*. He does not know that he is only allowed to worship Allah alone and that it is not allowed to attribute anything or anyone to Allah in any situation. Believing in such an advice contradicts the fundamental principle of Islam and therefore belief in this deen.

In addition, the man thinks that the dead can benefit and harm him and are able to relieve him from his problems – but who is able to do that

¹ *Shaykh*: scholar.

except Allah? Nobody and nothing. Therefore, only Allah's help alone must be sought.

People who raise such *shubuhaat*¹ need only to reflect upon the basis of this deen, without at the same time following their own desires and strangely having their own views confirmed at the same time. In reality, they need to think over this matter once but thoroughly and honestly – and very soon the matter will become clear.

A Muslim who has understood the basis of this deen and comes across the "hadeeth" mentioned in the 'possible situation', for him it is immediately clear and logical that this hadeeth is nothing but false: it obviously contradicts the basis of Islam, the basis which will permanently remain.

This does not mean that a person who is ignorant of one specific form of *‘ibaada*² from all the existing forms in Islam cannot be a Muslim. Maybe he is even unfamiliar with a lot of them. What however does make a difference is the ignorance of the fundamental principle of Islam: that everything which Allah has ordered mankind to do, ought to be done by seeking only His favour and not the favour of others and not by means of others. The person unfamiliar with this principle cannot be a Muslim.

The *‘Ibaada of al-Nadhr*³ is an example of one form of *‘ibaada*. Ignorance of this form of *‘ibaada* does not affect the validity of his faith. On the other hand, if he sees that people are performing this form of *‘ibaada* for other than Allah (swt) then he must reject and rebuke it immediately.

If he follows this event by imitating them instead of rejecting them (thereby violating the fundamental principle of this deen) he cannot be regarded as a Muslim any longer. This is because he is expected to have

¹ *Shubuhaat*: spurious and erroneous arguments, fallacies.

² *‘Ibaada*: worship.

³ *‘Ibaada of al-Nadhr*: obliging oneself to do a voluntary act of good that is not obligatory.

already received the Message that only Allah alone has the right to be worshipped.

If in the time of the Prophet (saws) one of the mushrikeen from the Arabs embraced Islam but continued to worship *Al-Laah*, *Al-Uzza* and *Manaat*¹, would the Muslims of then say he is a Muslim?

The Eighth Evidence

A mushrik surely does not fulfill the condition of *ikhlaas*² from the conditions of *La ilaaha illa Allah* (scholars have unanimously agreed upon this). So how can he be a Muslim?

This principle has already been explained in point one. I mention it separately here again due to its significance. One who does not perform his worship completely surrendering himself only to Allah (swt) alone, offering Him sincere devotion, violates the shahaadah entirely and can never be a Muslim. This is considered as the mightiest evidences for the basis of this deen. An agreement of the scholars also exists that the Islam of a person is not accepted as long as he is committing shirk. Allah says:

﴿فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَنُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“But if they make tawbah³, perform the prayer and give zakaah, then they are your brethren in deen and we explain the ayaat⁴ in detail for a people who know.”⁵

Al-Qurtuby says about this vers:

¹ *Al-Laah*, *Al-Uzza* and *Manaat*: idols which were worshipped in the time of jahiliyya.

² *Ikhlaas*: offering Him sincere devotion implies purging one's soul of non-Islamic beliefs.

³ *Tawbah*: repentance.

⁴ *Ayaat*: verses.

⁵ Surah At-Tawbah 9:11.

"فإن تابوا" أي من الشرك

"If they then make tawbah' – meaning tawbah from shirk. All the scholars of tafseer and all a'immah have agreed unanimously concerning this."

Allah says:

﴿إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِي اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾

"Except those who repent, correct it, hold fast to Allah and purify their deen (from shirk) for Allah, then they will be with the Mu'mineen. And Allah will grant the Mu'mineen a great reward."¹

Ibnu Taymiyyah (ra) says:

بَلْ إِخْلَاصُ الدِّينِ لِلَّهِ هُوَ الدِّينُ الَّذِي لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ سِوَاهُ وَهُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ بِهِ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ
مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَأَنْزَلَ بِهِ جَمِيعَ الْكُتُبِ وَاتَّفَقَ عَلَيْهِ أَيْمَةُ أَهْلِ الْإِيمَانِ وَهَذَا هُوَ خُلَاصَةُ الدَّعْوَةِ النَّبَوِيَّةِ
وَهُوَ قُطْبُ الْقُرْآنِ الَّذِي تَدُورُ عَلَيْهِ رَحَاهُ . قَالَ تَعَالَى "تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ . إِنَّا
أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ . أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ" وَالسُّورَةُ كُلُّهَا
عَامَّتُهَا فِي هَذَا الْمَعْنَى . كَقَوْلِهِ "قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ . وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ
أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ" إِلَى قَوْلِهِ "قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْبُدْ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي" إِلَى قَوْلِهِ "أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ
وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ"

"To serve Allah with ikhlaas is the one and only Religion which Allah accepts. For the spread of this deen he sent all the Prophets and revealed all the Books. The great scholars amongst the people of imaan have agreed upon this. This is the essence of the call of all Prophets and the

¹ Surah An-Nisaa' 4:146.

axis of the Qur'an, around which everything rotates. Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an:

﴿تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ﴾ (*) إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ﴾ (*) أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ﴾

“The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. Verily, we have sent down the Book to you in Truth. So, worship Allah sincerely for His sake only. Surely, the pure deen (ad-deen ul-khaalis [from shirk]) is for Allah only”.¹

Shaykh ul-Islam continues:

“Surah az-Zumar as a whole deals with this matter. Just like the following verse from the same chapter:

﴿قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ﴾ (*) وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ﴾

“Say: Verily, I am commanded to worship Allah with sincere devotion. And I am commanded (this) in order that I may be the first of those who submit themselves to Allah as Muslims”.²

Until His (swt) Words:

﴿قُلْ اللَّهُ أَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي﴾

“Say: (Only) Allah alone I worship, by performing my deen purely (i.e. free from shirk) for Him.”³

Until His (swt) Words:

﴿أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ﴾

¹ Surah Az-Zumar 39:1-3.

² Surah Az-Zumar 39:11-12.

³ Surah Az-Zumar 39:14.

“Is not Allah Sufficient for His slave? Yet they try to frighten you with those (whom they worship) besides Him.”¹“²

The Ninth Evidence

The mushrik definitely does not fulfill the condition of kufr bit-taghoot from the conditions of *La ilaaha illa Allah*. So how can he be Muslim?

Even though the requirement of rejecting and denying anything and anyone which is worshipped other than Allah is already included in the mentioned requirements, it is additionally repeated by some scholars due to its significance. He who submits to Allah (swt) alone, will automatically and simultaneously reject and refuse the *taghoot*³ (due to the antagonistic nature of tawheed and shirk).

Allah (swt) says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ﴾

“And verily We have sent among every ummah a Messenger (proclaiming): worship Allah and avoid taghoot.”⁴

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَن يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادَ﴾

“Those who avoid the taghoot by not worshipping them and turn to Allah (in repentance), for them are glad tidings. So announce the good news to My slaves.”⁵

¹ Surah Az-Zumar 39:36.

² Majmu‘u-l-Fatawa 10:49.

³ Everything and everyone who is worshipped beside Allah.

⁴ Surah An-Nahl 16:36.

⁵ Surah Az-Zumar 39:17.

Allah explains here that He ordered all of the Prophets to refrain from the taghoot and to call their nations to refrain from it by refusing its worship. It is impossible for a person to be a Muslim without implementing kufr bit-taghoot into his life. As Allah (swt) says:

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“There is no compulsion in deen. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. So whosoever disbelieves (rejects and refuses) the taghoot and has imaan in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.”¹

The scholars of *tafseer* are in agreement that the **most trustworthy handhold** mentioned here is referring to Islam itself. The narration from Muslim has already been mentioned above: that Islam is built upon “*...the worship of Allah as One and Unique*”². And in another narration: “*...that (only) Allah is worshipped and one makes kufr (rejects and refuses) with all that which is worshipped apart from Him*”.

Muslim also narrated from Abu Malik who narrated from his father, who said: “*I heard the Prophet (saws) saying: ‘whoever says La ilaaha illa Allah and makes kufr with all that which is worshipped other than Him, his property and life is thereafter forbidden for us and his reckoning is with Allah’*”. In another narration: “*Whoever declares Allah as One (in worship)...*”. The rest of the hadeeth is identical to the rest of the former narration mentioned.

So we ask, can a person supplicate to an imaginary god for his living, his success or anything else, which only Allah can be asked for and at the

¹ Surah Al-Baqarah 2:256.

² In this text the word ‘yuwahhada’ is mentioned, which is derived from the word ‘tawheed’. The arabic text was mentioned previously.

same time refuse these false gods? Most importantly, kufr bit-taghoot is fulfilled by refraining from it and from refraining from its worship and everything else relating to it.

The Tenth Evidence

The mushrik does not even fulfill the first duty in order for him to be able to enter Islam.

A valid shahaadah requires its implementation with all its conditions, as well as ʿibaada and tawheed for Allah. One cannot be a Muslim without fulfilling this condition. The first duty which a person is ordered to fulfill is the confession of belief, *La ilaaha illa Allah*. This includes the fulfillment of all its requirements, outwardly and inwardly. This is undoubtedly the task which is demanded from him. It is not sufficient to merely fulfill the apparent and outward requirements¹. If he appears to be a Muslim then we expect that he also fulfills the requirements of a Muslim inwardly².

Bukhary narrates from Ibnu ʿAbbas (ra):

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ : بَعَثَ مُعَاذًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ إِلَى الْيَمَنِ فَقَالَ ادْعُهُمْ إِلَى شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَطَاعُوا لِذَلِكَ فَأَعْلِمُهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ افْتَرَضَ عَلَيْهِمْ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَائِلَةَ فَإِنْ هُمْ أَطَاعُوا لِذَلِكَ فَأَعْلِمُهُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ افْتَرَضَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَدَقَةً فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ تُؤْخَذُ مِنْ أَغْنِيَائِهِمْ

¹ One who is practicing Islam in a way that one appears to be Muslim outwardly but inwardly he opposes it.

² As long as we do not see anything from him that would nullify his Islam, we regard him as a Muslim – even if in reality he is not a Muslim. The hypocrites (*Munafiqoon*) for example appear extraordinarily Islamic but inwardly they are the opposite. If we but clearly see shirk from someone, we conclude with certainty that he has not fulfilled the requirements to be a Muslim and hence the requirements of the Islam which he was ordered to practice.

وَتُرِدُّ عَلَى فُقَرَائِهِمْ" وفي رواية له "فَلْيَكُنْ أَوَّلَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ عِبَادَةُ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا عَرَفُوا اللَّهَ فَأَخْبِرْهُمْ..." وفي رواية له "فَلْيَكُنْ أَوَّلَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى أَنْ يُوحِّدُوا اللَّهَ تَعَالَى

The Prophet (saws) sent Mu‘aadh (ra) to Yemen. He said to Mu‘aadh (ra): “Call them to the shahaadah, that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that I am the Prophet of Allah. If they follow you in that then teach them that Allah has ordered to perform five compulsory prayers in the day and in the night. If they follow you in that, then teach them that Allah has made it obligatory to give zakaah, which will be taken from the rich and returned to the poor.”

In another narration:

“The first upon which you call them should be to worship Allah. If they then know Allah, teach them...”

In a third narration:

“The first upon which you call them should be that they declare Allah as One (in worship)”¹.

Al-Bukhary and Muslim narrate from Sahl ibnu Sa‘d (ra) that he said:

عن سَهْلِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يَعْني ابْنَ سَعْدٍ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ : يَوْمَ خَيْبَرَ لَأُعْطِيَنَّ الرَّايَةَ عَدَا رَجُلًا يُفْتَحُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يُحِبُّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيُحِبُّهُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ فَبَاتَ النَّاسُ لَيْلَتَهُمْ أَثِيَّهُمْ يُعْطَى فَعَدَوْا كُلُّهُمْ يَرْجُوهُ فَقَالَ أَيْنَ عَلِيٍّ فَقِيلَ يَشْتَكِي عَيْنَيْهِ فَبَصَقَ فِي عَيْنَيْهِ وَدَعَا لَهُ فَبَرَأَ كَأَن لَمْ يَكُنْ بِهِ وَجَعٌ فَأَعْطَاهُ فَقَالَ أَقَاتِلْهُمْ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مِثْلَنَا فَقَالَ انْفُذْ عَلَى رِسْلِكَ حَتَّى تَنْزِلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ ثُمَّ اذْعُمُهُمْ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَأَخْبِرْهُمْ بِمَا يَحِبُّ عَلَيْهِمْ فَوَاللَّهِ لَأَنْ يَهْدِيَ اللَّهُ بِكَ رَجُلًا خَيْرَ لَكَ مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَكَ حُمْرُ النَّعَمِ

¹ In Arabic: ‘an yuwahhidullah’.

“The Prophet (saws) said on the day of Khaibar: “Verily, tomorrow I will give the flag to a man through whose hands Allah will grant us victory. He loves Allah and His Messenger, and he is loved by Allah and His Messenger.” So the people waited during that night, wondering as to whom he would give the flag. (On the next day) each one of them was hoping to be given the flag. The Prophet (saws) asked: “Where is Ali (ra)?” It was said, “he is suffering from eye trouble”. So the Prophet (saws) spat in Ali’s (ra) eyes and supplicated for him and verily his condition improved as if he never had pain. So he gave him the flag. Hereupon Ali (ra) said: “I will fight them until they are like us”. The Prophet (saws) responded: “Move forward cautiously until you reach them. Then call them to Islam and inform them of what was imposed as a duty upon them. By Allah, even if Allah guides a single person through you then this is better for you than possessing red camels”.”

The prohibition of shirk comes above all other prohibitions, Allah says:

﴿قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا
أَوْلَادَكُمْ...﴾

“Say: Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents, kill not your children because of poverty.”¹

Allah (swt) informs us in the Qur’an that this was the Message which every Prophet conveyed to his nation. All scholars have unanimously agreed that tawheed was the first which all Prophets called their nations to. And He says:

﴿اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ﴾

“Worship Allah (alone)! You have no other ilaah but Him.”²

¹ Al-An‘aam 6:151.

² Al-‘A‘raaf 7:59.

The Eleventh Evidence

The mushrikoon from the early Arabs were definitely not Muslims.

To be honest, all people who do not differentiate between a Muslim and a mushrik ought to declare (according to their own incorrect ¹*‘aqeedah*) the majority of the mushrikeen from the Arabs² and many others to Muslims. Did not most of them consider themselves to be Muslims, identifying themselves with Islam, the deen of all Prophets, the true religion of Ibrahim³ (as): Monotheism, *al-Haneefiyyah*⁴? Due to their ignorance they thought to be personifying Islam. The incorrect ⁵*‘aqeedah* in these nations was often a consequence of shirk taking place due to jahl or wrong *ta’weel*⁵, not always and necessarily due to stubbornness.

What is the difference between a Muslim from the ummah of Muhammad (saws) who falls into shirk and thus becomes a mushrik and a Muslim from the *Hunafaa*⁶ who falls into shirk and thus becomes a mushrik? The **mushrikoon** from the Arabs were definitely **not Muslims**, as is also in the consensus of the scholars.

¹ *‘Aqeedah*: fundament of faith, the basis of Islam.

² Here the mushrikeen in the time before the Prophet (saws) was sent are being addressed.

³ The true religion of Ibrahim (as): Millatu Ibrahim.

⁴ *Al-Haneefiyyah*: the rejection of idolatry and worshipping none but Allah.

⁵ *Ta’weel*: interpretation.

⁶ *Hunafaa*: followers of al-Haneefiyyah.

Further Evidences

There are many other places in the Qur'an and the Sunnah which clarify the described basic principle of Islam. Some are briefly mentioned in the following passages. Some people misunderstand the evidences provided (concerning the Arab mushrikeen) and say: *"These evidences are not mentioned in the correct context because the Message which reached these people was that which was left over from Millatu Ibrahim"*.

I would like to mention that such a statement is indeed correct but one must also give thought to the mushrikeen of the time of fatrah. So, there were people who received the Message and there were those who did not receive it. Regardless, Allah (swt) defined them all as mushrikeen and applied on all of them the same law. There has always been an agreement upon this. Even the *Mubtadi'a*¹ amongst the Muslims in former times had this opinion.

Allah says:

﴿مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أُولَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ﴾

"It is not (proper) for the Prophet and those who believe to ask Allah's forgiveness for the mushrikeen, even though they be of kin (relatives) after it has become clear to them that they are the dwellers of the Fire."²

As mentioned earlier, those who have this wrong opinion ought to regard - according to their erroneous beliefs - the mushrikeen (who lived before

¹ *Mubtadi'a*: those who commit *bida'a*, which means that they innovate something which is not from Islam and introduce it into Islam. They are from a sect which has gone astray.

² Surah At-Tawbah 9:113.

the Prophet (saws) was sent) as Muslims¹. They identified themselves with Islam, the true religion (*millah*) of Ibrahim (as).

Then in fact it should also be allowed to pray for their forgiveness because according to their erroneous beliefs the people who lived before the Prophet (saws) came are not the ones who are being addressed in this verse – according to them. This is a denial of the verse (in the consensus of the scholars). Allah declared them all to mushrikeen, regardless of whether the Message reached them or not.

The information above must be kept in mind in order to understand the following verses:

Allah says:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ زَيْنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتَلَ أَوْلَادَهُمْ شُرَكَائُهُمْ لِيُزْدُوهُمْ وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ﴾

“And so to many of the mushrikeen their partners (attributed to Allah by themselves) have made fair-seeming the killing of their children in order to lead them to their own destruction and cause confusion in their religion. And if Allah had willed, they would not have done so. So leave them alone with their fabrications.”²

﴿وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

“And if anyone of the mushrikeen seeks your protection then grant him protection so that he may hear the Word of Allah (the Qur’an) and then

¹ The sons of Shaykh Muhammad ibnu Abd il-Wahhab and Hamd ibnu Nasir Aali Mu‘ammar said:

“If one commits deeds of kufr and shirk out of jahl or because there is no one who points out to him [his error], we do not call him kaafir until the evidences reach him. But we [also] do not say about him that he is a Muslim” (Ad-Durar: 10/136).

² Surah Al-An‘aam 6:137.

escort him to where he may be secure, that is because they are men who know not.”¹

In the latter verse, Allah (swt) mentions the mushrikeen and confirms that they do not know. Some people attack this evidence and argue: “How can you speak of ignorance whereas Islam was well known at that time?”

Apparently someone who argues in this way thinks that the Message reached every single person in the cities and in the rural areas. Surely, there were people amongst them to whom the Message of Islam did not reach. Here the question arises: Are those mushrikoon not undoubtedly included in this verse? Or are those mushrikoon also considered as Muslims for them?

Allah says:

﴿لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنْفَكِّينَ حَتَّى تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ﴾

“Those who disbelieved among the people of the Scripture² and the mushrikeen were not going to leave (their disbelief) until there came to them clear evidence.”³

﴿فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

“And if they embark on a boat, they invoke Allah, making their devotion pure for Him only, but when He brings them safely to (dry) land, behold, they committed shirk⁴.”⁵

¹ Surah At-Tawbah 9:6.

² Jews and Christians.

³ Surah Al-Baiyyinah 98:1.

⁴ Those who gave a share of their worship to others.

⁵ Surah Al-Ankaboot 29:65.

﴿أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ﴾

“Or lest you should say: It was only our fathers a foretime who took others as partners in worship along with Allah and we were (merely their) descendants after them. Will You then destroy us because of the deeds of men who negated¹?”²

﴿إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمُ الْهُدَى﴾

“They are but names which you have named – you and your fathers – for which Allah has sent down no authority. They follow but a guess and that which they themselves desire, whereas there has surely come to them the Guidance from their Lord!”³

﴿فَلَا تَكُ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِمَّا يَعْبُدُ هَؤُلَاءِ مَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُهُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَإِنَّا لَمَوَفُّوهُمْ نَصِيبَهُمْ غَيْرَ مَنْقُوصٍ﴾

“So be not in doubt as to what these people worship. They worship nothing but what their fathers worshipped before (them). And verily, We shall pay them back (in full) their portion without decreasing it.”⁴

﴿يَا صَاحِبِي السَّجَنِ أَرَأَيْتَ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

¹ Those who rejected Tawheed and worshipped others besides Allah.

² Surah Al-'A'raaf 7:173.

³ Surah An-Najm 53:23.

⁴ Surah Hud 11:109.

"O my two companions of the prison! (I ask you): Are many different lords better or Allah, the One, the Irresistible? You worship besides Him nothing but only names which you and your forefathers have named (fabricated) – for which Allah has sent down no authority. The command (or Judgment) is for none but Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That is the Straight Religion, but most people know not."¹

﴿وَجَدْتَهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ
عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ﴾

"I found her and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allah and shaytaan has made their deeds seem pleasing to their eyes, and has kept them away from (Allah's) Path, so they have no guidance."²

All Prophets addressed their nations as mushrikeen. In fact, they did this even before their prophethood. They demanded from their nations to renounce the *shirk*³ which they were committing and to worship Allah alone. This fact has been proven through the Qur'an (as some of the previously mentioned verses show), the Sunnah and the agreement of the *sahaabah*⁴.

¹ Surah Yusuf 12:39-40.

² Surah An-Naml 27:24.

³ Shaykh Abd ur-Rahman ibnu Hassan ibnu Muhammad ibnu Abd il-Wahhab, may Allah be merciful to him, said:

"The early scholars and scholars of nowadays, from the sahaabah, the tabi'een, the a'immah and all from the Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'a are in agreement that a person cannot be a Muslim as long as he does not make himself free from shirk akbar and from him who commits it. One has to abhor them and show them enmity, everyone according to his ability and power and one must perform his deeds sincerely for Allah's sake and free from shirk." (Ad-Durar: 11: 545, 546).

⁴ *Sahaabah*: the early Muslims, who were the first followers and companions of the Prophet Muhammad (saws) during his lifetime.

Specious arguments from ambiguous texts from the Qur'an and Sunnah

How the muftadi'ah of all times try to nullify the sources of Sharee'ah:

Whenever the muftadi'ah throughout history find a statement in the Qur'an and Sunnah which contradicts their bid'ah, they try obsessively to declare their astray belief as correct and then call it a permitted *ijtihaad* – i.e. a permitted opinion in Islam. They begin to interpret the Qur'an incorrectly and the ahaadeeth suddenly have no more power of evidence, if accepting those ahaadeeth means the end of their astray beliefs.

Or they refer to what is ambiguous in the Qur'an and Sunnah in order to cancel out some of it with the other and to reject thousands of clear proofs with it. Then they sell this behaviour as permitted *ijtihaad*. Those people who do not know anything themselves and follow these muftadi'ah in this matter say: "This is not just anything. It comes from the mighty scholars. They are allowed to bring out such evidences from the sources."

Their similitude is that of a group of Christians who once said to some sahaabah: "What is your problem with us? In your Book Allah speaks of Himself in the plural form, He says **We**. But we also say that He is three."

Yes, the word "**We**" can have two meanings in the Arabic language. One form is when a group is speaking, i.e. many people. The other form is the majestic plural – to glorify oneself by addressing oneself in the plural form.

It is obligatory for the Mu'min to subordinate that which is plurivalent (*mutashaabih*) and take that which is clear (*muhkam*). If he does it not, he will harvest kufr and an astray belief. As for those Christians, they were very familiar with the *mutashaabih*, but what about the following verse:



"Say: He is Allah, (the) One"¹

This verse and a lot of other similar verses, did the Christians not know of them? What a wonder! In reality, they know this verse very well but they say, "We see it this way, this is what we derived from the sources. We give greater value to this view, this is our *madhhab*², this is our *ijtihaad*."

This is exactly the method practiced by the *mubtadi'a* at all times. At the same time you find some of them occupied with the tiniest details in the sciences of *hadeeth*. They explain to the people that it is prohibited to cause a conflict between two *ahaadeeth* as long as it is still possible to interpret them in a way so as to unite their meanings³, even if it generally has no effect on your life whether you take this *hadeeth* or the other. They say it is never permitted for you to prefer one *hadeeth* if you can unite them both.

This is indeed true but when someone criticizes them for declaring *mushrikeen* to Muslims and causing a mighty *fasaad*⁴ then it is suddenly no problem anymore without any reason to make one evidence contradict the other or even to interpret the evidence in a way that it contradicts hundreds of clear evidences from the Qur'an and Sunnah and the basis of this *deen*.

Therefore, the question arises: Why are the Christians not allowed to interpret "**We** (of Allah)" from the Qur'an and Sunnah as **three**? Surely the answer is: because thereby they would contradict hundreds of evidences from the Qur'an and Sunnah.

¹ Surah Al-Ikhlaas 112:1.

² *Madhhab*: way of understanding the sources and extracting rules out of them.

³ In other words to interpret the *ahaadeeth* in a way that they no more contradict each other.

⁴ *Fasaad*: mischief.

Accordingly, I have listed and explained in the following pages the most popular shubuhaat, which were mentioned in the course of time and led to confusion. I have limited the list to a few shubuhaat because I expect the reader to be able to ward off the rest himself. Those who have an erroneous belief always understand and interpret texts according to the same principles every time. Once a person understands the basis of this deen his intellect cannot accept any *dalaal*¹. He is just required to give a little thought to the matters which seem ambiguous and he will easily be able to recognize and refute them.

The first shubhah: The hadeeth regarding Dhaatu Anwaat

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمَّا خَرَجَ إِلَى حُنَيْنٍ مَرَّ بِشَجَرَةٍ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ يُقَالُ لَهَا ذَاتُ
أَنْوَاطٍ يُعَلَّقُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَقَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ اجْعَلْ لَنَا ذَاتَ أَنْوَاطٍ كَمَا هُمْ ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ
فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ هَذَا كَمَا قَالَ قَوْمُ مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ
إِلَهَةٌ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ سُنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ

قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيحٌ وَأَبُو وَاقِدٍ اللَّيْثِيُّ اسْمُهُ الْحَارِثُ بْنُ عَوْفٍ وَفِي الْبَابِ
عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ وَأَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ

At-Tirmidhee narrates from Abu Waaqid al-Laithee (ra):

“As the Prophet (saws) departed to Hunain he came across a tree belonging to the mushrikeen. They named the tree Dhaatu Anwaat and used to hang their weapons² upon it. They¹ said: “Oh rasul-Allah, make

¹ *Dalaal*: error, going astray.

² The mushrikoon performed this act believing that their swords would receive blessing from the tree.

for us a Dhaatu Anwaat like their Dhaatu Anwaat.” Upon this he (saws) said: “Subhaan Allah! That which you have said is equal to that which the people of Musa² said: ‘Make for us an ilaah just like their aalihah³.’ By the One in Who’s Hand my soul is, you will definitely follow the way of those who were before you.” Abu ‘Isa (at-Tirmidhee) said: “this hadeeth is hassan saheeh”.”

The principles of Islam were previously explained as well as the method applied when faced with plurivalent statements. According to the two explanations, it is clear how the above hadeeth of Dhaatu Anwaat **must not** be understood. It would be unacceptable to say that the Prophet (saws) considered those sahaabah as Muslims although they did not understand Islam and asked to commit shirk.

In reality, one who does not understand the basic principles of Islam or wishes to forge them purposely, is the one who compiles such a false assertion. It is sadly often the aim of such people to support their assertion that a mushrik can very well be a Muslim “because the sahaabah also worshipped something else and were still Muslims”.

As a result and according to their imagination every idolater could be a Muslim, regardless of how much and what sort of shirk is committed: most importantly, he sees himself as a Muslim and is ignorant. A statement so incorrect never came from any of the previous scholars. So, apart from the plurivalent ahaadeeth they are also in search of plurivalent statements from scholars in order to confirm and back up their false understandings. The correct method of understanding ambiguous statements must be learnt and applied.

¹ The people mentioned in this hadeeth were the Muslims who departed to Hunain with the Prophet (saws). These Muslims had entered Islam a short time ago. Most of them entered Islam at the opening of Mekka, which took place shortly before the departure to Hunain.

² People of Musa (as)/Banu Israa’eel/the children of Israel.

³ Surah Al-‘Araf 7:138.

It is necessary to understand this hadeeth so that it is in harmony with the Revelation, especially with the basic principles of Islam. It will become apparent that there are various interpretations.

The different interpretations of this hadeeth from the scholars have been presented. The primary aim here is not to go into details regarding the different interpretations but to merely exemplify that it was never permitted to annul the basic principles of Islam by means of a single hadeeth transmitted by at-Tirmidhee, especially when other possibilities of interpretation exist. The interpretations are as follows:

The first interpretation:

These sahaabah (ra) did not ask to commit shirk akbar. When these sahaabah (ra) asked for a similar ilaah, they in fact committed *shirk asghar*¹. They wanted Muhammad (saws) to supplicate to Allah to give them a similar tree. The sahaabah (ra) also wanted to receive the *barakah*² which the mushrikoon asked for (but of course did not become). Such a deed is but to be rejected and hence the Prophet (saws) reacted with harsh words. Such a deed is to be rejected due to various reasons:

- 1) What they requested was actually an imitation of the kuffaar³.
- 2) It was not just any ordinary imitation of the kuffaar. It was rather concerning the worship of something other than Allah.
- 3) It was a road which could easily lead to shirk akbar (by eventually worshipping the tree itself) especially because this method ought to help

¹ *Shirk asghar*: minor shirk, shirk which does not bring one out of the pale of Islam.

² *Barakah*: blessing. Bear in mind that the barakah from Allah does in fact lie in some objects, places and times. Take for example the blessed mosques of Makkah, Medina and al-Quds and the surrounding land and the water from the well of Zam Zam. It is necessary to understand this matter otherwise it is difficult to comprehend why the companions made this request at all. In reality, the matter is not as strange as it seems to be.

³ The term used in the Arabic language to describe the imitation of the kaafireen is *at-tashabbuhu bi-l-kaafireen*.

them in the battle against the enemy, a matter to which many emotions are connected.

Due to these reasons it was necessary to point out to the sahaabah (ra) their mistake with such rigidity and compare their request with Banu Isra'eel's request.

We can deduce that the sahaabah (ra) did not ask for shirk akbar because:

- The comparison of the sahaabah (ra) with Banu Isra'eel does not mean equivalence in every respect. In Arabic when a comparison is made using the letter "kaaf" it does not imperatively mean that the two compared objects must be equal in all areas. By this style of writing the similarities may be reduced to just a few aspects. The significance of this partial comparison by the Prophet (saws) was to highlight the magnitude of their (of these recently converted companions) mistake and to frighten them off.
- When looking at the reason mentioned in the hadeeth for this prohibition, we realize that there is no indication nor reference to shirk akbar.

Some statements of several scholars in this regard

After mentioning this hadeeth Ibnu Taymiyyah (ra) said:

فأنكر النبي ﷺ مجردَ مشابَهَتِهِم الكُفَّارَ فِي اتِّخَاذِ شَجَرَةٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَيْهَا مَعْلِقِينَ عَلَيْهَا سِلَاحَهُمْ فَكَيْفَ بِمَا هُوَ أَطْمَمَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ مِثْلِهِمُ الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَوْ هُوَ الشِّرْكَ بِعَيْنِهِ فَمَنْ قَصَدَ بُقْعَةً يَرْجُو الْخَيْرَ بِقَصْدِهَا وَلَمْ تَسْتَحِبَّ الشَّرِيعَةُ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ مِنَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ وَبَعْضُهُ أَشَدُّ مِنْ بَعْضٍ سِوَاءَ كَانَتْ الْبُقْعَةُ شَجَرَةً أَوْ غَيْرَهَا أَوْ قَنَاةَ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ جَبَلًا أَوْ مَغَارَةً وَسِوَاءَ قَصْدِهَا لِيُصَلِّيَ عِنْدَهَا أَوْ لِيَدْعُوَ عِنْدَهَا أَوْ لِيَقْرَأَ عِنْدَهَا أَوْ لِيَذْكُرَ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ عِنْدَهَا أَوْ لِيَنْسُكَ عِنْدَهَا بِحَيْثُ يَخْصُ تِلْكَ الْبُقْعَةُ بِنَوْعٍ مِنَ الْعِبَادَةِ الَّتِي لَمْ يُشْرَعْ تَخْصِصُ تِلْكَ الْبُقْعَةَ بِهِ لَا عَيْنًا وَلَا نَوْعًا

“The Prophet (saws) rebuked them for just attempting to imitate the kuffaar concerning a tree by which they (the kuffaar) wanted to stop and hand their weapons upon. Then what about the one who imitates the

mushrikeen even more or commits the same acts of shirk? So he who searches for some soil because he thinks that searching for it will bring him some goodness – and the Shareeʿah rejects such an action – commits an act from the munkaraat¹. Every such deed is worse than the other – no matter whether it is concerned with a tree, a stream, a mountain or a cave. It is irrelevant whether he wants to pray there or supplicate or recite the Qurʾan or remember Allah (swt) or make a sacrifice. In other words, it is the act of devoting a specific ʿibaadah to a specific place, even if this specific place was never specified in the Shareeʿah.”²

Ibnu-l-Qayyim, Muhammadu-bnu Abdi-l-Wahhab³ and also ash-Shatibi⁴ commented similarly on the hadeeth.

It is extremely unlikely that the Sahaabah mentioned in the hadeeth did not know the meaning of Islam.

This interpretation of the hadeeth explained is more plausible and obvious due to the following reason: even though these Sahaabah (ra) were new in

¹ *Munkaraat*: the deeds which are evil and to be rejected.

² *Iqtidaʿu-s-Sirati-l-Mustaqeem*: 2/644.

³ It is clear from Muhammadu-bnu Abdi-l-Wahhab's statements concerning this hadeeth that he also shares this opinion. Some people do not understand his statements and attempt to nullify the basic understanding of this deen with his statements.

Firstly, it is of no relevance if any scholar makes a mistake concerning the basic principles of this deen. But the truth is that this specific scholar was far from the ignorance of the basic principles of this deen. His statements have been twisted to distortion producing statements which imply that he makes no takfeer on people who worship idols. The misunderstanding of this scholar's statements will disappear after reading the chapter concerning the application of the terms kufr and takfir. The mistake made by such people will become transparent for those who understand the terminology.

⁴ A well-known scholar of the Maliki school of thought. He lived in Granada in the Islamic Spain at that time and died in 790 after hijrah. Ash-Shaatibi was a well-known scholar of *usulu-l-fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence).

Islam it is nevertheless barely imaginable that they did not understand the fundamentals of this deen.

It is important to recall here that even the mushrikeen of that time were absolutely aware and knew exactly what Muhammad (saws) was conveying. They knew that the shahaadah of Islam *“there is nothing worthy of worship except Allah”* meant that everything worshipped besides Allah (swt) is to be renounced and forsaken.

The Prophet (saws) rebuked the mushrikeen for worshipping idols besides Allah (swt) and this was but the actual reason why Abu Jahl and all the kuffaar from the Quraysh took the Prophet (saws) as an enemy. The following example makes the matter easier to understand: If the meaning of *“la ilaaha illa Allah”* really means “there is no creator other than Allah” then Abu Jahl would have been a Muslim. Why? Because he knew and believed that there is no creator than Allah (swt). What amount of ignorance must have been absorbed in order for the people of nowadays on the one hand to believe that they themselves are Muslims and on the other hand they have not yet understood that which even the mushrikoon of then understood about the shahaadah?

﴿أَجْعَلِ الْآلِهَةَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عُجَابٌ * وَأَنْطَلِقُ الْمَلَأُ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ آمُشُوا وَأَصْبِرُوا
عَلَى آلِهَتِكُمْ إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ﴾

“Has he made all the aalihah into One ilaah (Allah)¹? This is really something very strange! And the leaders among them went about (saying): Go on, and remain constant to your aalihah! For this (what Muhammad is saying) is truly a thing designed (against you)!”²

¹ Here lies the proof of the matter being addressed in this book. The mushrikoon knew exactly what Muhammad (saws) was calling to.

² Surah Saad 38: 5-6.

The majority of the Arabs understood the meaning of Islam after the da‘wah of the Prophet (saws) became known. It is narrated in the musnad of Imam Ahmad that Jaabir (ra) said:

مَكَثَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بِمَكَّةَ عَشْرَ سِنِينَ يَتَّبِعُ النَّاسَ فِي مَنَازِلِهِمْ بِعُكَاظٍ وَمِحَنَةٍ وَفِي الْمَوَاسِمِ يَمْنَى
يَقُولُ "مَنْ يُثَوِّبَنِي مَنْ يَنْصُرُنِي حَتَّى أُبَلِّغَ رِسَالَاتِي رَبِّي وَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ" حَتَّى إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَخْرُجُ مِنَ الْيَمَنِ أَوْ
مِنْ مُضَرَ كَذَا قَالَ فَيَأْتِيهِ قَوْمُهُ فَيَقُولُونَ احْذَرْ غُلَامٌ قُرَيْشٍ لَا يَفْتِنُكَ وَيَمْشِي بَيْنَ رِحَالِهِمْ وَهُمْ
يُشِيرُونَ إِلَيْهِ بِالْأَصَابِعِ

“The Prophet stayed in Mecca for ten years. In ‘Ukadh and in Majanna¹ and at the time of hajj in Mina he went to the people to their houses saying: “Who gives me shelter, who supports me so that I can spread the Message of my Lord, he shall be granted Paradise.” Those coming to hajj from Yemen or Mudar were told from their own tribesmen: “Beware of the young man (the Prophet (saws)) from the Quraysh so that he does not lead you into temptation (and then you will abandon your religion)!” And he (saws) walked between their mounts while they pointed with their fingers at him.”

There is no doubt that the people were informed and knew what the first and most important requirement is even before they entered Islam. Therefore, it ought to be even more clear to them once they entered Islam. So, it is very unlikely that they did not know about this important matter of Islam.

It is also important to recall here that the new Muslims and those who had not entered Islam or not yet entered Islam were surrounded by other Muslims who had accepted Islam since a longer time and the Prophet (saws) himself was also still among them.

¹ ‘Ukadh and Majanna are names of locations. The marketplace of ‘Ukadh was an important centre for the Arabs at that time.

The second interpretation:

These Sahaabah (ra) requested to commit shirk akbar. They asked Allah (swt) for something they could worship besides Him, in other words they asked for a second ilaah¹.

¹ As mentioned earlier, I consider this interpretation as an incorrect understanding of the hadeeth. It is however, quite apparent that some scholars from the Da'wah Najdiyyah perceived this version of the hadeeth as correct. This version is mentioned here to indicate that this interpretation is not contradictory to the basic principles of Islam (even though it is a very unlikely interpretation). It is necessary to state a specific example here:

Abd ur-Rahmani-bnu-Hasan (ra) was one of the most important scholars from Da'wah Najdiyyah. His book titled "Fathu-l-Majeed" is the most famous explanation of Kitabu-t-Tawheed (written by his grandfather Muhammad-ubnu Abdi-l-Wahhab). On page 118 he comments on the comparison which the Prophet Muhammad (saws) made (of the sahaabah (ra)):

قوله: قُلْتُمْ والذي نفسي بيده كما قالت بنو إسرائيل لموسى "اجعل لنا إلهاً كما لهم آلهة" شِبْهَ مَقَالَتِهِمْ هَذِهِ يَقُولُ بنو إسرائيل، بِجَمَاعٍ أَنَّ كَلَاماً طَلَبَ أَنْ يُجْعَلَ لَهُ مَا يَأْتُهُ وَيَعْبُدُهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ، وَإِنْ اخْتَلَفَ اللَّفْظَانِ، فَالْمَعْنَى وَاحِدٌ، فَتَغْيِيرُ الْأَسْمَاءِ لَا يَغْيِرُ الْحَقِيقَةَ

"...He (saws) equated their statement with Banu Isra'eel's because of the features in common: both asked for something which they (could) worship besides Allah. Both phrases are expressed differently but the implication is the same: the change in the description does not change the meaning at all."

Abdu-r-Rahmani-bnu-Hasan writes in his book that these companions asked for shirk akbar even though their statement does not appear to be as obvious as the statement of Musa's (as) people.

In the following it will be explained why this version of the hadeeth is not in contradiction with the fundamental laws of Islam. This ought to be obvious for those who have understood the area of Tawhid well. However, there are some *ghulaat* (those who exaggerate) who, on account of their ignorance, are unable to separate the actual definitions. Thereby, they slip into the mistake of regarding investigative enquiries as matters of aslu-d-deen. As a result, they declare everyone as kuffaar without having understood the actual meanings.

The statement of Abdur-r-Rahmani-bnu Hasan is therefore an anomaly and an erroneous interpretation. Similar mistakes have occurred by famous scholars but in

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So according to this understanding these people were absolutely unaware of the true meaning of Islam. They did indeed accept Islam but had not understood it correctly. Consequently, they asked for shirk akbar without realizing that their wish contradicts Islam.

The following important points must be considered:

- The people mentioned in the hadeeth were only a small part of the Sahaabah. Not everyone went out together with the Prophet (saws) to Hunain and by no means did all the Muslims and all the Sahaabah make this request. They were not even all of those who embraced Islam just recently.
- These people pledged themselves to Islam. Judicially, they were Muslims before this specific request. Also, since nobody ever saw them committing shirk, they must indeed be considered as Muslims. Similarly, nobody ever heard a statement from them to deduce that they were ignorant of Islam. This would have not happened if such an incident had occurred earlier.
- Up until this occurrence they had not understood Islam properly (according to this interpretation). So they appeared to be Muslims but had actually not entered imaan.
- These Sahaabah (ra) had accepted Islam and departed to Hunain with the Prophet (saws). We can conclude that this statement from the Sahaabah (ra) was made due to absolute ignorance and not due to aversion to the deen or *nifaaq*¹. If they had been *munafiqeen*² they would have nothing more pointless to do than to ask Muhammad (saws) openly for such a tree. The scholars therefore have always emphasized that these

reality this is the nature of man. However, not every mistake leads to the exclusion from Islam, as opposed to the way the ignorant people think. The problem is that they do not even know the books of 'their own' scholars. So when a statement like the above is presented to them they are unable to explain it. Those of them who obsessively tend to exaggerate even more also exclude these scholars from Islam. May Allah keep us safe from exaggeration and its opposite and may Allah guide us and them, amin.

¹ *Nifaaq*: hypocrisy.

² *Munafiqoon*: hypocrites.

Sahaabah (ra) had a good intention and they were absolutely ignorant of their mistake.

If one understands this hadeeth according to this version of the interpretation then an important question arises: The *hukm of riddah*¹ must normally be applied on the Sahaabah (ra) if they were really ignorant of Islam. Why is this hukm not mentioned in the hadeeth?

Why the hukm of riddah is not mentioned in the hadeeth

If a person is (according to his outward appearance) known to be a Muslim but then commits a deed or makes a statement surpassing the limits of Islam he is generally excluded from Islam and has committed apostasy. It is now irrelevant whether he was (inwardly) really a Mu'min before or not. There are specific laws in Islam which must be applied when apostasy is committed. They are primarily the following:

- If someone is really ignorant and it is known that he is ignorant then he will firstly be taught. The hujjah will be introduced to him. The scholars describe this procedure as “ta^crif” when in connection with riddah.
- *Istitabah*² is required from him due to his statement or deed.

But there can be several reasons why *istitabah* does not appear in this hadeeth or why it is not clearly mentioned that riddah occurred:

First possibility

These Sahaabah (ra) were Muslims up to this incident even if they had not entered into imaan inwardly. It is explained above that they generally followed the truth and accepted everything from the Prophet (saws). After it became apparent by means of this request that they had not yet understood Islam, in other words that they had never fulfilled imaan inwardly until now, the Sahaabah (ra) withdrew from their request.

¹ The ruling of apostasy.

² *Istitabah*: demanding tawbah, repentance.

Hence, they became Muslims and understood imaan inwardly and fulfilled it. What is the use of *istitabah* if they already repented? Let me rephrase it: even if it turns out that they had not understood Islam correctly before, the *hukm* of *riddah* is not applied on them¹. Looking back, this does not mean that they are considered as Muslims inwardly and outwardly (before this incident took place).

It is a matter of *fiqh* to analyze whether or not they are to be considered as non-Muslims (taking into account the other *ahkamu-shar'iyah*) before this incident took place. That is a completely different topic and has nothing to do with the basis of Islam.

Only an ignorant exaggerator could claim here that the scholars who interpreted this hadeeth as in the second interpretation did not understand Islam because they described *murtaddeen*² as Muslims!³

¹ In Arabic we would say:

لا يلحقهم حكم الردة

² *Murtaddeen*: apostates.

³ Some of those exaggerators who consider themselves great scholars are indeed engaged with this issue. Despite their lack of knowledge concerning the *usul* (roots) and *furuc* (branches) of Islam and their arrogance they read one explanation of the statements of the scholars (which I have referred to before) and unable to understand what they read, they consider it as an extreme contradiction. Thereupon they reach the conclusion that the author of these explanations could not have understood Islam.

Being narrow minded they did not see that in fact they are the ones who got it all wrong. The book they dealt with was merely referring to somebody who commits shirk or does not understand Islam and therefore cannot be a Muslim. Even though it was clearly said in the explanation of the statements that according to this point of view the mentioned Sahaabah (ra) did not embrace Islam at all. Is it possible that a person writes a whole book about the contradiction between shirk and Islam and even mentions this contradiction in the same passage and then says that a person who commits shirk can be a Muslim?

One must be out of his mind to say something so contradictory. Before accusing the person whose books they are learning from, it would be advisable to accuse themselves for being ignorant and having the wrong understanding. Sadly, all *mubtadi'ah* are proud and ignorance is flowing through their veins.

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Second possibility

The Prophet (saws) asked the Sahaabah (ra) to make tawbah but it was not mentioned by the narrator of the hadeeth. This second possibility should not be excluded even though it may seem somewhat odd¹. Exactly this explanation is found by some statements of the scholars concerning several ahaadeeth but how likely or unlikely it may be, must be analyzed separately. It was mentioned earlier that regarding this hadeeth it is almost impossible.

Reference to a significant misunderstanding

Some people who read the statements from the Da'wah Najdiyyah understand something entirely different to what is actually meant. The root of the problem lies in following the statements of the scholars without referring to the Qur'an and Sunnah. The statements are hence misunderstood and consequently entirely incorrect understandings are used as the basis. So some people have come to think that a Muslim who asks to commit shirk akbar out of ignorance is still a Muslim with complete imaan as long as he does not commit the action. Such a claim can only

It was shown earlier that some of the scholars of the Da'wah Najdiyyah concluded that these Sahaabah (ra) demanded shirk akbar. As already mentioned the ghulaat do not really have a clue about the books of 'their own' scholars. Additionally, most of their knowledge concerning these books is a result of reading these books in a language other than Arabic. Consequently, it is not clear for them that ('their') scholars of the Da'wah Najdiyyah actually had this opinion and explained their opinion in their books.

So if these people make takfir on somebody just because he mentions the opinions of these scholars – without sharing this opinion, how can they consider even these scholars as Muslims?

¹ It was mentioned earlier that it is highly unlikely that the Sahaabah (ra) asked to commit shirk akbar. It is even more awkward to accept that the Sahaabah (ra) asked to commit *shirk akbar* and the Prophet (saws) carried out *istitabah* while it was not even mentioned in the hadeeth. I have mentioned this second possibility only because (here again) there are some people who have this opinion. It is primarily my attempt to show that this opinion, no matter how odd it sounds, has nothing to do with a lack of understanding of Islam.

come from a person who himself has a problem in understanding the basis of Islam.

As mentioned before, it is impossible for a person to fulfill imaan as long as he has not understood the shahaadah (even though he may appear to be a Muslim outwardly). It is entirely clear that as soon as someone asks to commit shirk akbar he has not fulfilled imaan and Islam in this moment.

The consequence of the wrong opinion of this hadeeth

Those who are using this hadeeth and claiming that some mushrikoon are actually Muslims bring up the following argument: ***“The sahaabah (ra) asked to commit shirk akbar and someone who asks to commit shirk is like the one who carries it out. The Prophet (saws) did not make any takfir on them, as a result they were Muslims. Consequently, a person is excused who asks for shirk akbar and commits it and thus is still a Muslim due to his ignorance.”***

Whoever understands the hadeeth in this way, lacks the correct understanding of Tawheed in reality. The incorrect understanding of the hadeeth subsequently produces the results which were mentioned and must be rejected.

According to the incorrect understanding a person can worship more than one ilaah and simultaneously worship one ilaah and also be a Muslim, Mukhlis¹ and Hanif² at the same time. He dissociates himself from worshipping the taghut and at the same time worships him. Accordingly, any mushrik committing any form of shirk can be a Muslim!

So, it is irrelevant whether he believes that there is more than one creator, believes that Allah (swt) has a child, worships ‘Isa³ (as) or performs his worship to cows. All these actions are acts of shirk akbar but according to

¹ Mukhlis: One who offers Allah (swt) sincere devotion

² Hanif: One who never joins gods with Allah (swt) and by all means avoids practicing idolatry or polytheism

³ ‘Isa: Jesus.

the astray belief of some people it is possible to be a muslim with such deeds or any other act of shirk akbar. All what counts is that this specific person claims to be a Muslim. In reality, Islam does not have any *haqiqah*¹ for these people. The real meaning of Islam for them is to merely claim it.

So if these Sahaabah (ra) had asked the Prophet (saws) if they could worship al-Laāt, al-ʿUzza and Manaāt they could have remained as Muslims according to the astray belief mentioned – just like a person who worships these (and other) idols nowadays out of ignorance.

The truth is that in Islam it is necessary to dissociate oneself from such mushrikeen. But those deluded people even turn this fundament upside down. He who does what he is obliged to do and dissociates himself from the mushrikeen is suddenly one who excludes “shirk committing Muslims” from Islam. He is now from the *Khawarij*, the sect which practiced takfir on Muslims!

The second shubhah: The hadeeth regarding Muʿaadh (ra)

Ibnu Maajah narrates from Abdullah ibnu Abi Awfaa:

لَمَّا قَدِمَ مُعَاذٌ مِنَ الشَّامِ سَجَدَ لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ مَا هَذَا يَا مُعَاذُ قَالَ أَتَيْتُ الشَّامَ فَوَافَقْتُهُمْ
يَسْجُدُونَ لِأَسَاقِفَتِهِمْ وَبَطَارِقَتِهِمْ فَوَدِدْتُ فِي نَفْسِي أَنْ نَفْعَلَ ذَلِكَ بِكَ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَلَا
تَفْعَلُوا فَإِنِّي لَوْ كُنْتُ أَمْرًا أَحَدًا أَنْ يَسْجُدَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَأَمَرْتُ الْمَرْأَةَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِزَوْجِهَا وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ
مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَا تُؤَدِّي الْمَرْأَةُ حَقَّ رَّبِّهَا حَتَّى تُؤَدِّيَ حَقَّ زَوْجِهَا وَلَوْ سَأَلَهَا نَفْسُهَا وَهِيَ عَلَى قَتَبٍ لَمْ
تَمْنَعُهُ

“When Muʿaadh returned from the Shaam area he prostrated himself before the Prophet (saws). The Prophet (saws) asked him: “What is this,

¹ *Haqiqah*: actual meaning, content, reality, truth.

oh Mu^caadh?” He replied: “I visited the Shaam area and witnessed them prostrating before their priests and patriarchs. I wished that we do the same for you.” The Prophet (saws) said: “Do not do it. If I were to order anyone to prostrate before anyone else besides Allah, I would have ordered the wife to prostrate herself before her husband. By Him in whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, the wife will not fulfill the rights of her Lord until she fulfills the rights of her husband, and even if he were to request for her whilst she is sitting upon a camel’s saddle, she ought not to refuse him”.”

The shubhah raised concerning this hadeeth is similar to the shubhah raised concerning the hadeeth of Dhaatu Anwaat. The people who have the wrong view also dare to claim here that Mu^caadh (ra) worshipped the Prophet (saws) by prostrating to him and took him (saws) as a partner besides Allah (swt) but he was forgiven. They claim: Mu^caadh thereby must have left the deen because he worshipped the Prophet (saws) but the Prophet (saws) did not declare him as a kaafir, instead he (saws) was of the following opinion: “That is no problem, Mu^caadh. If you are jaahil and you don’t know that you are not allowed to worship me and take me as a partner besides Allah and regard me as equal to Allah, then it is no problem.”

However, the question arises: Why do they not say that Mu^caadh prostrated himself before the Prophet (saws) only as a greeting to welcome him and not to worship him?

Just like in the case of the family of Yusuf¹ (as) and the angels and Adam (as). And the next question is: Why do they prefer the interpretation, which contradicts the entire Qur’an, the Sunnah, the ijmaa^ca of the Muslims and the essence of this deen?

Similarly, the question arises: Why are they not of the opinion that the family of Yusuf (as) worshipped him? Why are you then not of the opinion that when the Prophet (saws) said: **“...I would have ordered the wife to**

¹ Yusuf: Joseph.

prostrate before her husband” that he (saws) actually meant to say: “If I were to order anyone to worship someone other than Allah, then I would have ordered the woman to worship her husband”?!

One must reflect also on the narration in the musnad of Imaam Ahmad. Isma'eel narrates from Ayyub from Al-Qaasim al-Shaibaany from Abdullah ibnu Abi Awfaa:

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ حَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ عَنْ الْقَاسِمِ الشَّيْبَانِيِّ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي أَوْفَى قَالَ قَدِمَ مُعَاذُ الْيَمَنِ أَوْ قَالَ الشَّامِ فَرَأَى النَّصَارَى تَسْجُدُ لِبَطَارِقَتِهَا وَأَسَاقِفَتِهَا فَرَوَّأَ فِي نَفْسِهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُعْظَمَ فَلَمَّا قَدِمَ قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ رَأَيْتُ النَّصَارَى تَسْجُدُ لِبَطَارِقَتِهَا وَأَسَاقِفَتِهَا فَرَوَّأْتُ فِي نَفْسِي أَنَّكَ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تُعْظَمَ فَقَالَ لَوْ كُنْتُ أَمِيرًا أَحَدًا أَنْ يَسْجُدَ لِأَحَدٍ لَأَمَرْتُ الْمَرْأَةَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِزَوْجِهَا وَلَا تُؤَدِّي الْمَرْأَةُ حَقَّ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْهَا كُلَّهُ حَتَّى تُؤَدِّيَ حَقَّ زَوْجِهَا عَلَيْهَا كُلَّهُ حَتَّى لَوْ سَأَلَهَا نَفْسَهَا وَهِيَ عَلَى ظَهْرِ قَتَبٍ لَأَعْطَتْهُ إِتَاءَهُ

حَدَّثَنَا مُعَاذُ بْنُ هِشَامٍ حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عَنْ الْقَاسِمِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ رَجُلٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكُوفَةِ أَحَدِ بَنِي مُرَّةَ بْنِ هَمَّامٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ أَتَى الشَّامَ فَرَأَى النَّصَارَى فَذَكَرَ مَعْنَاهُ إِلَّا أَنَّهُ قَالَ قُلْتُ لِأَيِّ شَيْءٍ تَصْنَعُونَ هَذَا قَالُوا هَذَا كَانَ حَيَّةَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ قَبْلَنَا فَقُلْتُ نَحْنُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ نَصْنَعَ هَذَا بَنَيْنَا فَقَالَ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِنَّهُمْ كَذَبُوا عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ كَمَا حَرَّفُوا كِتَابَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَبْدَلَنَا خَيْرًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ السَّلَامَ حَيَّةَ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ.

“Mu’aadh traveled to Yemen or the Shaam area. There he found the Christians prostrating themselves before their bishops and priests. He said to himself that the Prophet (saws) has more right to be honored. When he returned he told the Prophet (saws) of this and said: “I wanted to do the same for you; I thought that you have more right to be honored.” The Prophet (saws) replied: “If I were to order anyone to do this then I would have ordered the woman to prostrate herself before her husband. A woman will not fulfill the rights of her Lord completely until she fulfills the rights of her husband completely, even if he were to

request for her whilst she were sitting upon a camel's saddle, she ought to obey him".

Abd ur-Rahman ibnu Abi Layla reports from his father about Mu'adh ibnu Jabal that he said: "...that he found in the Shaam area the Christians prostrating themselves..." So I asked: "Why do you do this?" They explained to me that this was the way to greet the Prophets in the past. I said: "We have more right to do this with our Prophet." The Prophet (saws) thus explained to me that they were keen to spread about lies concerning their Prophets and manipulated their books. He (saws) said: "Allah has given us something better. He has given us the salaam, which is the greeting of the people of Paradise"."

The third shubhah: Muhammad's (saws) ummah has been pardoned for its mistakes

The people who raise this shubhah use Allah's (swt) Words:

﴿وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ﴾

"And there is no sin on you concerning that in which you made a mistake, except in regard to what your hearts deliberately intend."¹

It is narrated from Ibnu 'Abbaas that the Prophet (saws) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ عَنْ أُمَّتِي الْخَطَأَ وَالنِّسْيَانَ

"Verily, Allah has pardoned for my people their mistakes and forgetfulness..."

This hadeeth was declared as saheeh by Ibnu Hibbaan and al-Haakim.

In reality, the response to this shubhah ought to be clear and does not require any explanation. For those who commit shirk, they anyway fall out

¹ Surah Al-Ahzaab 33:5.

of the definition mentioned in the verse and hadeeth – as they have left Islam and are not at all addressed. Is it possible for a scholar to say: “The mushrik’s mistakes are forgiven because Allah has forgiven the **Muslim ummah** their mistakes”?! This contradiction is tremendously obvious and transparent. They say: “The definition of a mistake is to do something wrong, thinking it is correct.” This is really a strange argumentation.

The fourth shubhah: It also happens that a person falls into kufr and is not declared as a kaafir if there was an obstacle¹

It must be mentioned here that it is occasionally found in the sources concerning a certain person that he committed kufr or shirk. This however does not always necessarily mean that he committed kufr akbar or shirk akbar, bringing a person out of the pale of Islam and making him dwell in Hellfire forever, without any chance of forgiveness. In fact, here the mentioning of kufr and shirk means kufr asghar and shirk asghar ².

An example for this would be a hadeeth recorded in al-Bukhary in *Kitaab ul-Imaan* by ibnu Masood:

عَنْ زَيْدٍ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ أَبَا وَائِلٍ عَنِ الْمُرْجَةِ فَقَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ سَبَابُ الْمُسْلِمِ
فُسُوقٌ وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ

“Reviling a Muslim is fisq³ and fighting him is kufr”.

Bearing this hadeeth in mind the Qur’an shows us that if Muslims do fight each other it does not mean coercively that they have fallen into kufr:

¹ Manic

² *Kufr asghar*: minor kufr, kufr which does not bring one out of the pale of Islam.

³ *Fisq*: act of evil, evildoing.

﴿وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا...﴾

“And if two parties (or groups) among the Mu’mineen fall into a fight...”¹.

So, in this verse Allah calls them Mu’mineen and in the verse following it, He says:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ﴾

“The Mu’minoos are but brothers...”².

Also the following hadeeth narrated by Imaam Ahmad in his musnad from ibnu ‘Abbas demonstrates this matter similarly:

أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَشِئْتُ فَقَالَ لَهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ أَجَعَلْتَنِي وَاللَّهِ عَدْلًا بَلْ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ
وَحْدَهُ

“A companion of the Prophet (saws) once said to him, “...it is as Allah wills and you will”. Upon this the Prophet (saws) immediately responded, “are you making me equal to Allah? (Say) as Allah alone wills”.”

A deviation from the actual meaning of a certain word is however not permitted except if a clear proof is present and this is known. But that is not the subject of our discussion. We are discussing about someone who worships something other than Allah (swt). Whereas it is known that shirk asghar does not include worshipping something other than Allah (swt). Nevertheless, shirk asghar becomes shirk akbar as soon as it includes worshipping something other than Allah (swt).

When some people say, “he fell into kufr, however kufr did not fall onto him”, they actually cause confusion and make it difficult to understand the definition of the term kufr and thus also this deen. For he who does not

¹ Surah Hujuraat 49: 9.

² Surah Hujuraat 49: 10.

understand the true meaning of kufr, also does not understand the true meaning of imaan and consequently does not recognize the boundary between the two.

It is therefore necessary to cling to the explanations and definitions disclosed in the revelations, Allah's (swt) Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saws).

The statement mentioned above is not found anywhere in the words of the Prophet (saws) or the salaf. Hence, it is also not found in the words of the early scholars, who had a solid understanding regarding questions on imaan. Whenever they mention something similar, it arises clearly from their statements whether they meant kufr akbar or kufr asghar.

Some people however take for granted such sentences and come to an entirely incorrect conclusion, for instance they say: "A man commits kufr¹ but his kufr will be forgiven because he is a jaahil." This is of course wrong! When kufr takes place in actual fact, it will never be forgiven.

So it cannot be that a man who committed kufr akbar in the dunya and died in this state without making tawbah, will stand in front of Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment and his kufr will be forgiven. In reality, some obstacle prevented him from falling into kufr in the first place. It is incorrect to say that he committed kufr and he is simply excused from it.

The difference between committing kufr knowingly and committing kufr unknowingly is clear and as you read further it will become clearer insha' Allah. It is most correct to say: ***"If a person commits a deed or makes a statement intentionally out of refusal or denial of the Qur'an and Sunnah, he becomes a kaafir."***

Take for example the ignorance of a specific ayah. This jahl could be the obstacle preventing one from falling into kufr; **the person actually never really committed kufr** (because he never refused the Qur'anic verse

¹ i.e. meaning that his kufr is obvious inwardly and apparent outwardly and the man is a kaafir by Allah.

knowingly). How can someone of sound mind declare that this ignorant person is a kaafir and his kufr will be forgiven?

It must be clarified again that kufr¹ can only then occur once this person has received the knowledge through the Message and then turns away, refuses or denies it. In this regard it is not right to proclaim that a person can commit kufr before receiving the Message and will be punished for it, as Ibnu Taymiyyah has also repeated several times. He who absolutely does not know the Message cannot fall into kufr for which he will be punished. This is even linguistically very simple to understand. Ibnu Mandhur said:

الْكُفْرُ: جُحُود النعمة وهو ضدُّ الشكر وقوله تعالى “إِنَّا بِكُلِّ كَافِرٍ نَّعَمَةٌ” أَيَّ جاحدون وَكَفَرْنَا نَعْمَةً
الله: يَكْفُرُهَا كُفُورًا وَكُفْرَانًا وَكَفَرْنَا بِهَا: جَحَدَهَا وَسَتَرَهَا وَكَافَرَهُ حَقُّهُ: جَحَدَهُ وَرَجُلٌ مُكْفِّرٌ مَجْهُودُ
النعمة مع إحسانه وَرَجُلٌ كَافِرٌ: جاحِدٌ لَأَنْعَمَ اللهُ مَشْتَقٌّ مِنَ السَّتْرِ وَقِيلَ لِأَنَّهُ مُعْطًى عَلَى قَلْبِهِ

“Kufr is the denial of the blessings (ni‘am) and it is the opposite of gratefulness. Allah (swt) says:

﴿وَقَالُوا إِنَّا بِكُلِّ كَافِرٍ نَّعَمَةٌ﴾

And they say: "For us, we reject all such things (we make kufr deny, negate with all of it)."²

‘Kafara ni‘matallahi yakfuruha kufuuran wa kufraanan wa kafara biha’ means to deny, hide or cover Allah’s Grace. It is derived from the word

¹ *Kufu-t-ta‘dhib* is being referred to here. See footnote 14 for more information. A completely ignorant man is not referred to with this type of kufr. The linguistic meaning of kafara is ‘to cover up something’. The kaafir covers up the truth consciously so he must have therefore known it before committing kufr. To rephrase it: the trial in this world primarily serves to distinguish the Mu‘min from the kaafir. Even if sometimes there were people who did not receive the Message. This also indicates that the essential meaning of the word kufr describes the deliberate refusal of the Truth.

² Surah Al-Qasas 28:48.

*'satr' (cover) and some scholars said the one who committed kufr has a 'covered' heart.'*¹

So when a word is used in matters of the Shari'ah, the actual meaning of that word never entirely leaves its Arabic meaning. After all, Allah (swt) revealed the Qur'an in native and clear Arabic language. This is the case even when the meaning of the word is broadened in certain situations or when specific rules and conditions are applied to the word.

The one who denies something (the kaafir) can only then be a denier if he knows the truth or if he had the opportunity or possibility to learn the truth but denied or refused it. There is no kufr except after gaining knowledge about a matter and then denying and refusing it – then one becomes a kaafir.

Hence, it ought to be clear that if a person worships anything other than Allah (swt) or besides Allah (swt), he indeed commits shirk and therefore becomes a mushrik – whether or not he was aware of if the action he committed was an act of shirk. Likewise, if he commits kufr akbar his action is that of kufr. Yet if he does not know that this action of his was kufr and therefore does not deny any of the sources (which condemns this action as kufr), the true meaning of kufr cannot be applied to him. This is impossible on grounds of his ignorance.

Consider a man who says something which contradicts a verse of the Qur'an. He however does not know about that verse. Is he now a kaafir who will be forgiven? In other words, is a man who does not know a Qur'anic verse a kaafir? Or is it not rather such that he did not even do anything wrong at all because the ayah never reached him? It is clear that the assertion is simply wrong to say "a person fell into kufr but it will be forgiven" or "he will be forgiven for being a kaafir".

Rather, the true meaning of kufr does not even apply to him in first place – neither linguistically, nor according to the law of Islam, nor from common

¹ See Lisanu-l-arab, Chapter ka-fa-ra.

sense may he be called as such. So he who commits shirk (= *ashraka*) and worships something other than Allah (swt) (= *‘abada ghairAllahi*) and equates something with Him (= *‘adala bi Rabbihi*) and takes something besides Him for worship (= *ittakhadha ma‘Allahi ilaahan akhar*), he thus will be called a **mushrik**: a person worshipping something other than Allah (*‘aabidun li ghairAllahi*), equating something with his Lord (*‘aadilun bi Rabbihi*), and taking something for worship besides Allah (*muttakhidhun ma‘Allahi ilaahan akhara*).

This is necessarily the outcome and result from the understanding of language, Sharee‘ah, and common sense. Whoever has a sparkle of knowledge of the Arabic language will know that the active participle (*ism ul-faa‘il*) carries the meaning of the verb (*fi‘l*) in itself. It is therefore allowed in the Arabic language to replace the verb with the active participle in order to take over its function.

The statements of some people nowadays are indeed very strange. According to them it is wrong to call a person who drinks alcohol as ‘one who drinks alcohol’. They say, “Don’t say that, he probably doesn’t know”.

Did he drink the alcohol now or not? Or concerning a man who has a sexual relationship with a woman who is not his wife, they will say: “Don’t call him *zaani*, he doesn’t know”. Did he now go to that woman or not? A person is named according to his deeds and actions – whether or not he will be punished for these deeds. The same applies to the mushrik. Did he or did he not worship something or someone other than Allah?

The fifth shubhah: Someone who commits shirk under compulsion (ikrah) is not a mushrik

Allah (swt) has ordered us, only in one case, **not** to judge a man according to what we see outwardly of him if we know of his *ikrah*¹. But if he inwardly also worships something or someone other than Allah (swt), then he is a mushrik without a doubt. Admittedly, we are not able to discover what is really in his inside. Ikrah is the only exception in the matter of shirk. Allah (swt) excluded the *mukrah*² clearly in His Book:

﴿مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيْمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالإِيْمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

“Whoever disbelieved (made kufr) in Allah after his belief, except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in Faith (Imaan). But those who open their breasts to disbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a great torment.”³

In truth there are many more misconceptions which exist (for example the hadeeth of the man who ordered his children to burn his corpse⁴) but I prefer not to mention any more in this book. As said before, once the methodology of those who have gone astray becomes transparent, one can easily deal with the misconceptions they introduce.

¹ *Ikrah*: compulsion, coercion, threatened (to be killed).

² *Mukrah*: the one who is under compulsion, forced.

³ Surah An-Nahl 16:106.

⁴ It is clearly stated in some ahaadeeth that the man did nothing good in his life “except to practice Tawheed”.

The sixth shubhah: They claim, "Kufr committed by mistake is forgiven but what if shirk is committed by mistake? Are they not the same?"

Firstly, nobody who is of sound mind said something as such. In fact, it was earlier mentioned that kufr and shirk are both excused if committed under compulsion. We also know additionally that if someone says something unintentionally and accidentally then his statement does not count – **it is as though he never said it**. Just like the one man who made an error and said out of joy¹:

ثُمَّ قَالَ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْفَرَحِ اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ عَبْدِي وَأَنَا رَبُّكَ أَخْطَأَ مِنْ شِدَّةِ لَفْرَحٍ

"Oh Allah, you are my slave and I am your master".

It is undoubtedly clear that it is not considered as committing shirk if a person finds himself in the mentioned situation. It is really strange that people use this issue in order to prove that a person who worships something or someone besides Allah is possibly an ignorant 'Muslim'.

If a man in such a situation is asked why he said this and if he replies, ***"Allah is my slave and I am His master. I said it consciously. I am master over everything. No one gives me orders but I give orders to everyone,"*** such a person (according to their methodology) could be an ignorant Muslim if he *just* says such a thing out of ignorance while he identifies himself with Islam theoretically!

A person who narrates texts about kufr or shirk and who therefore utters kufr or shirk is also not guilty of committing either of them. This teacher is not considered to be a kaafir or a mushrik. It is as though one accidentally utters kufr. Similarly, dictating texts or informing others of kufr is also not considered as falling into kufr because his words are not considered as his

¹ As mentioned in the hadeeth narrated in Sahih Muslim from Anas ibnu Malik.

own. Otherwise every Muslim would fall into shirk by merely reciting the Qur'an (by reciting verses which, if taken out of context contain kufr. For example verses where Allah informs us about what the kuffaar say).

The same applies if the one who does not know the reality of a matter: he does not become a kaafir (such as a blind man who prostrates not knowing that before him is the statue of an idol). By giving these matters a little bit of thought one realizes that they do not have anything to do with shirk. They are all basic matters which do not even need a lot of thinking.

You will not find many scholars mentioning these issues in their books and those who have mentioned them did so just casually because they did not expect any person with a sound mind to say something else. Likewise the one who utters shirk in his sleep – anyone with a sound mind would not claim that this person committed shirk and Allah will forgive him for his shirk.

If somebody recites (for instance, from a verse in the Qur'an where the statement of the Christians is mentioned) that ***“Isa is the son of Allah”***, then these were not his words. It is unbelievable that some people claim that shirk akbar is indeed committed in these situations but Allah simply forgives them. How can somebody say: ***“See, not everyone who utters shirk is therefore immediately a mushrik”***!

Closing words

May Allah (swt) accept this work and use it for the explanation of the True Message of all Prophets (as). May He (swt) forgive us and all Muslims. May He (swt) unite us with our Prophet and his brothers, the other Prophets (saws) in the Gardens of Eternity, underneath which rivers flow. May He (swt) lead his deen to victory. Our Lord, let us leave this world as Muslims and unite us with those who are righteous.

Finally, I want to thank my Lord, the Most Generous, for His support in this work and its completion. My thanks as well to all those who made a contribution to this book. May our Lord reward them in the best way.

The following applies to all I have written: **Allah (swt) knows best.**

May the peace and blessings of Allah (swt) be upon our Prophet!

All praise belongs to Allah alone.

الله أعلم, وصلى الله على نبينا محمد وآله وصحبه

والحمد لله رب العالمين